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MEMOIRS

OF

SOPHIA DOROTHEA,

CONSORT OF GEORGE I.

CHIEFLY FROM THE SECRET ARCHIVES OF HANOVER,
BRUNSWICK, BERLIN, AND VIENNA;

INCLUDING

A DIARY OF THE CONVERSATIONS

OF ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONAGES OF THOSE COURTS,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF HER HISTORY,

WITH

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

GENERALLY as historical information has been diffused of late years, there exists a large class of readers not perfectly cognisant of the causes that little more than a hundred years ago placed a foreigner on the throne of these kingdoms. His pretensions had been transmitted to him by his father, a younger son of one of the branches of the house of Brunswick-Lüneburg, who obtained them through his marriage with Sophia, a scion of the House of Stuart, and grand-daughter of James I. The first issue of this union was George, Crown Prince of Hanover, which state was raised from a duchy into an electorate towards the close of the seventeenth century. This Prince

was born in 1660, and married, in 1682, his cousin, Sophia Dorothea, the only child of the Duke of Zelle. But their union was dissolved, about ten years subsequently, in consequence of the violence and insults which the Princess suffered from her husband at last becoming intolerable, and because an attempt had been made to fix upon her the stain of a criminal intimacy with the celebrated Count Königsmark. The veil of mystery is here completely drawn from the tragic fate which so suddenly overtook this brilliant soldier of fortune, and a true account given, not only of the proceedings which led to the arbitrary divorce of the Princess from her husband, (soon afterwards, by the demise of his father, Elector of Hanover,) and forced separation from her children, George, afterwards George II., and Sophia Dorothea, subsequently consort of Frederick William I., of Prussia, but of her confinement for life in the castle of Ahlden, in the duchy of Zelle. Her husband profited greatly by the expatriation of James II., as the Act of Settlement passed by the British Parliament in 1701 declared his mother, the Dowager Electress Sophia of Hanover, to be

next in succession to the British crown after the demise of Queen Anne. The Dowager Electress dying a short time before the Queen, her claim to the throne descended to her son, then of the mature age of fifty-three.

It is not wonderful, then, as well on account of the nature of all the proceedings against the unhappy Princess, as of the deliberate murder of Königsmark, that the Court of Hanover should be particularly solicitous that all the circumstances relative to both might be buried in obscurity, and if possible consigned to utter oblivion. Hence it was that on the arrival of the Elector of Hanover in England, his new subjects were left by him to suppose that he was a widower. Not a word was dropped by his Majesty denoting the existence of his unhappy consort, and the members of his Hanoverian *suite*, male and female, knew their business a great deal too well to breathe so much as a hint on the subject. As a singular proof of the care taken to prevent inquiry, Chamberlayne's Present State of Great Britain, published 1716, which professes to give the most comprehensive information respecting the family of George I., as well as the state of his new kingdom, does not

contain even the name of Sophia Dorothea; and in the Memoirs of Ker of Kersland, published about the commencement of the year 1726, the writer, who had visited the courts of Hanover and Zelle some years after her marriage, merely alludes to her as "a most beautiful Princess, sole heiress of the Duke of Zelle." Ker was Consul at Amsterdam in the reign of James II., and put himself to great trouble and expense to advance the interests of the House of Brunswick-Lüneburg. In his work he complains bitterly, that when he was no longer of use, so little were his services regarded, that he could not get paid his expenses. The Hanoverian favourites grasped at everything, and treated all British subjects who had claims on the King, with studied indignity. He involved himself in trouble, by publishing his Memoirs, and died in the King's Bench on the 8th of July, 1726. Of the debt of 3,000*l.*, owing to him for his disbursements on behalf of the King, he never received a shilling.

Notwithstanding this extraordinary paucity of information in England, regarding the consort of its sovereign, mysterious rumours found their way into

circulation respecting her, previously to the death of George I., which were repeated with greater confidence during the reign of his son. On the Continent, especially throughout Germany and France, the name of Sophia Dorothea had become the theme of the most marvellous narratives. Some of these, in a printed shape, reached England, and though full of absurdities, were translated and eagerly read. But it was not till after the death of George II. that the subject could be considered a familiar one, and for some time subsequently to the accession of George III., the published narratives, whether from a German or French original, untrustworthy as they were, were frequently rendered more so, by the writers employing erroneous names. In the Gentleman's Magazine for 1773, there is " A Narrative of the Sufferings of *Christina*, Princess of Zelle," evidently from a German source, where the truth, compared to the fiction, is as Falstaff's halfpenny-worth of bread to his prodigious quantity of sack. Horace Walpole flattered himself that, in the recollections of a cast-off mistress of George II., and other gossiping sources, he had obtained revelations respecting the mysterious Princess of Zelle, as au-

thentic as he thought them extraordinary. He revealed, however, little more than had been frequently published on the Continent, but notwithstanding his numerous errors respecting the Princess and her handsome lover, his statements excited a great deal of attention. Archdeacon Coxe, in his Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole, has preserved some of the features of the same sad story, and alludes to the general belief of Königsmark's assassination by the Countess Platen.

From these sources, or more directly from the "*Histoire de la Duchesse d'Hanovre*," published in 1732, were derived the different biographies of the consort of George I., that issued from the press in this country. In 1821, a work was published in London, under the title of "Anecdotes and Characters of the House of Brunswick," which, among other marvels, contained an assumed translation from a German narrative, ostensibly written by a person who pretended to have been secretary to the dowager Electress Sophia, and divulging her secrets, as it was put forth, for the benefit of Prince Frederic, her great grandson. This writer's revelations are very singular—so very singular indeed, as to be utterly unworthy of credit. But monstrous as

are the statements of this pretended secretary, the journal he produces as that of the Princess Sophia Dorothea is a still clumsier fabrication. She is there represented as being confined to the one damp room in the castle where she was immured, and as having no other attendants than her jailer, a certain "Long Piet," and his wife. It is scarcely necessary to add, that no such persons were in the establishment at Ahlden, and that the "Journal" is a romance of the most common-place character.

The Princess was confined certainly, and most jealously watched and guarded; but as a prisoner of state, not as a vulgar criminal. She was allowed the retinue of a princess, was mistress of a large income, and might have all the indulgences proper for a person of her rank, save those she most ardently desired,—freedom from espionage, her liberty, and the society of her children. Writing formed her principal occupation, and a considerable portion of this work is drawn from materials collected by herself during her long and arbitrary seclusion from the world. In the composition of these pages, recourse has also been had to the secret archives of Hanover, Brunswick,

Vienna, Dresden, and Berlin, as well as to papers preserved by descendants of various friends of the imprisoned Princess. The documents of which the most use has been made, are the following:—

1. *Leichen-predigt auf C. E. Gräfin von Platen, mit den Personalien.* This is the death-bed confession of the Countess Platen, and possesses remarks in the margin in the hand-writing of the officiating clergyman.—MS. from the Archives of Vienna.

2. *Nachrichten von der ehemaligen Churprinzessin Sophie Dorothea von Hannover, sogenannten Prinzessin von Ahlden, Gemahlin des Churprinzen Georg Ludwig, nachherigen König Georg I. von Grossbritannien. Geschrieben von der Hofdame der Churprinzessin dem Fräulein von dem Knesebeck.* This is the memoir of Sophia Dorothea written by her faithful attendant Mademoiselle Knesebeck, subsequently Lady of Honour at the court of her daughter, the Queen of Prussia.—MS. from the Archives of Berlin, a translation of which will be found in the Appendix.

3. Papers transmitted by Sophia Dorothea, shortly before her decease, to persons in her con-

fidence, bearing the title *Precis de mon destin et de ma prison*. This was a large parcel, containing the very curious "Diary of Conversations," to be found in the second volume of this work. The original MS. is in Hanover, and there is a copy in Berlin.

4. Documents from 1665 to 1726, relating to the fate of the Princess.—From the Archives of Brunswick.

5. Letters from the Princess, written during her imprisonment.—In private hands.

6. Baumgarten's Extracts from the Archives at Zelle.

7. Thies's copies of documents relating to the dissolution of marriage of the Princess.—From the Archives of Berlin.

8. The opinion of the learned Thomasius on her inheritance.—From the Archives at Hanover. A copy, preserved by her solicitor, is in the possession of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge.

9. Depositions of certain witnesses respecting the murder of Count Königsmark.—From MSS in the Archives at Hanover.

Many other sources of information have been

sought, and every effort made to render this work a memorial worthy of the illustrious Princess, whose story is now, for the first time, presented to the reader in a manner which it is hoped will be considered as deserving of his confidence as of his sympathy.

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impulse to these visions was given by his marriage with Sophia, daughter of the Queen of Bohemia, and grand-daughter of James I. King of England. This alliance opened to him a prospect—distant, it is true,—but sufficiently near to the British throne, to encourage his ambitious tendencies, and he employed all his resources to turn it to the most advantage.

In the endeavours he made to extend his influence, he created what was considered a brilliant court, at an expense for which his revenues were shortly found inadequate. He established communications, by which he received early intelligence of everything that transpired in those quarters where his attention was most strongly directed. In this way he learned how his brother George was amusing himself with a pretty French woman at Breda; but this news excited no apprehension. Marriage was out of the question, even had he not the security of a solemn promise; so he contented himself with indulging occasionally, to his consort and to his confidential attendants, in facetious observations respecting his brother's studies with his accomplished *madame*.

Although Duke George William seemed shut

out from the possession of the lady to whom he had surrendered his heart, by the two modes of obtaining the objects of their affections open to ducal lovers, he in a happy hour remembered that there was a third to which the objections the young Marquise d'Olbreuse might very properly entertain to the position of a mistress, and the obstacles that lay in the way of his making her his duchess, did not apply. This was a species of marriage which would satisfy the lady's scruples by having the sanction of the church, yet would not interfere with the *prejudices* of the gentleman, for it would not possess the authority of the law: at least not in the sense understood in this country. It is well known throughout Germany by the name of a *morganatic, or left-handed marriage,**

* On this subject the Conversations Lexikon gives the following explanation. "Morganatic marriage, *(matrimonium ad morganaticam, matrimonium ad legem Salicam)* derived from the Gothic word *morgjan*, to abridge, to limit; likewise called left-handed marriage, is that kind of marriage in which it is stipulated by the marriage contract, that the wife of lower condition, and her children, shall be excluded from the prerogatives of the rank, and from the succession of the husband and father. According to the Prussian civil law, it is allowed to nobles and royal councillors; by the common law

and had often been had recourse to by its magnates, and by no family more frequently than by that of which Duke George William was a member.

As early as the 12th century we find Duke Henry the Lion forming such a connexion, and, with occasional omissions, the precedent was transmitted from father to son, as though it were a prerogative belonging to the title of the lords of Brunswick.

It is evident that these German princes were a most ingenious race,—nor is it less apparent that the ladies of the different states they governed were easily satisfied. No doubt they thought, to be united to a royal lover by a left handed marriage, better than having no hand in any marriage at all. It is said that princes seldom sue in vain, and when they have the decency to get the sanction of the church to their suits, we of course can have nothing to say against them. Nevertheless,

to the high nobility only." The late King of Prussia availed himself of this convenient institution, and took a second wife of this peculiar species, to whom he had been united sixteen years at the time of his decease. She was a Countess Harrach, and was created by him Countess of Hohenzollern, and Princess of Liegnitz.

there appears to our matter-of-fact English sense, to be a sort of *leger-de-main* in this morganatic matrimony, which leaves such an impression of awkwardness on right-thinking minds as usually results from all left-handed affairs.

But whatever we may think of it, Duke George William recurred to this favourable arrangement for amatory princes, with extraordinary satisfaction, and lost no time in making known to his fascinating mistress his intention of having recourse to it, in her behalf. But, to the extreme astonishment of his Serene Highness, the fair Eleonore seemed quite indifferent to the honour designed her. The Duke probably forgot that she was not a countrywoman, and although marriages with either hand were often dispensed with by the ladies highest in favour at the court of Louis XIV., the daughter of the Marquis d'Olbreuse was of a class superior to the favourites of that magnificent sovereign.

The beautiful Eleonore did not approve of a morganatic marriage; she could not be brought to understand the singular convenience of such a contract. She withstood all solicitations, she declined the very handsome settlements her lover

proposed to attach to the ambiguous union; in short, it was apparent that she held in very little esteem the matrimonial usages of German Potentates.

Duke George William was amazed; such an instance of indifference to the wishes of the Lords of Brunswick was not to be found in the archives. He could not account for it. He was almost in despair, and no doubt wished that the beautiful creature to whom he was so fondly attached, had been born in a German duchy. The French lessons were interrupted, that he might exhibit, with sufficient effect, the numerous precedents for this species of wedlock, furnished by his own family annals.* But his highness was quite disconcerted by the want of respect shown by the young lady to the example of so many of his exalted relations. She evidently thought but little of the ties that connected his ancestor, Duke Henry the younger, with

* We have before us the result of the researches of a distinguished German scholar into these unions of the Brunswick family. He begins with Henry the Lion, one of the heroes of the 12th century, and concludes with the late Duke of Sussex, whose alliance with Lady Augusta Murray he regards as a morganatic marriage. The list of members of this

the adventurous Eva von Trott,* and not much more of those by which his uncle Duke Christian was joined to the equally honoured Ursula von der Ohe.†

From the daughter he appealed to the father, who was not an uninterested spectator of his passion. The Marquis was duly impressed with his Highness's very liberal intentions, but, being a

family who entered into such engagements, comprises thirty-two sovereign princes.

* Eva was the daughter of a captain of the guards, and was appointed a lady in waiting on the Duchess. She usually contrived to conceal her pregnancy by retiring into the country before suspicions were excited; but she seems to have been found out at last, for she was dismissed from court in the year 1531. Some scandal arising, she made use of a singular plan for putting an end to it. It was reported, that she died when on a journey to join her father, in proof of which, a wax figure resembling her was publicly exposed as her corpse on a high scaffold, a funeral solemnised, and masses said for her soul. In the mean time she proceeded secretly to Stauffenburg, where she was visited by the Duke till the year 1541; her secret however transpired, and she fled from place to place, and is said to have died at Halberstadt. She had nine children by the Duke.

† Ursula was married in the year 1629, to George von Isselbrook, member of the Privy Council, and of the court of justice at Zelle.

conscientious man as well as a Frenchman, he could only afford the Duke his best wishes, as he was disinclined to attempt any interference with his daughter's inclinations.

The young lady, however, could not help perceiving that her father was suffering all that an impoverished exile in a strange land could endure; and she was perfectly well aware that, by fulfilling the Duke's wishes, she should secure for the Marquis a comfortable provision for life. How much was due to her father's necessities, how much to the persuasions of the Duchess de Tarento, a lady celebrated for her gallantries and completely in the Duke's interest, and how much to her lover's importunities, for the wavering of her virtuous resolutions, must remain a mystery. Certain it is, Duke George William one day received the gratifying information from the lips of the long obdurate Eleonore, that she acceded to his request for a left-handed marriage.

On the twenty-sixth birth-day of Eleonore d'Olbreuse, the Duchess of Tarento gave a brilliant entertainment in her honour: among other costly gifts, she presented her young friend with a medallion of her lover, and did everything she could

to show that she approved of her entering into the proposed alliance. The Duke was the principal feature in the day's festivities, in the course of which he placed in the hands of his *fiancée* a munificent mark of his regard in the shape of a costly dressing-case, and implored so fervently, and promised so liberally, that her virtuous resolutions gave way altogether.

It was at this critical moment that he received intelligence of the death of his elder brother, the reigning Duke of Zelle, and the unjustifiable seizure of the government by a younger brother, Duke John Frederic, who had taken advantage of the absence of the legitimate successor. This made it necessary that he should depart immediately from Holland to look after his claims in Brunswick; but, before he quitted his mistress, he placed a paper in her hand, in which she found that he had settled on her, in case of his death, the whole of his private fortune, with the exception of a few legacies only.

The ceremony of a morganatic marriage was gone through in September 1665; and, after the Duke had settled his dispute with his younger brother, which he was at last enabled to do

satisfactorily by the mediation of Bishop Ernest Augustus, he took up his abode with the Marquise at the seat of government.* She now bore the name of Von Harburg, which had belonged to one of his ancestors, but at her lover's suggestion, she was afterwards allowed by the emperor to assume a respectable position among the German nobility.

The life of Duke George William passed so happily in the society of his Morganatic bride, and her fascinations and superior intelligence were so manifest, that he seemed every day to become more enamoured. He was at a loss how to show the grateful sense he entertained of the happiness she had procured him, till, in the following year an opportunity presented itself, of which he availed himself with a degree of liberality, that took every one by surprise.

This was the birth of a child; a most welcome

* Zelle, the capital of the duchy, possessed a palace and several other handsome buildings, and appears to have been singularly connected with the history of unfortunate princesses, for as well as having been the birth-place of Sophia Dorothea, it was the residence, from the year 1772, till her death in 1775, of the hapless Caroline Matilda, Queen of Denmark.

event to all parties except the politic Bishop of Osnabrück and those who shared his sentiments. This child, who was born on the 15th of September, 1666, proved to be a daughter, and was christened with much ceremony, by the name of Sophia Dorothea. The Duke was delighted at this event, and evinced his satisfaction by the most liberal arrangements for mother and child; and as time passed on, and they gained more and more upon his affections, his chief thought seemed to be for their aggrandisement.

These dispositions in favour of such connections, were regarded by the Bishop and his little court at Osnabrück with open ridicule yet concealed disquietude. Ernest Augustus, though he held the security of his brother's promise not to enter into a legal marriage, and reposed implicit confidence in it, liked not the diversion of the Duke's private property from what he thought its proper direction,—that is, its inheritance by himself. Reports had reached him of the Duke's boundless generosity to his fair favourite, that gave him no slight uneasiness; of course being deeply interested in the disposal of his brother's property, he looked with a jaundiced eye upon Madame von Harburg

and her little daughter, but apparently he was friendly, and did nothing to betray to the Duke the extent of his prejudices.

Bishop Ernest liked this generosity the less, because, from the magnificent style in which he delighted to live, he had drawn much too frequently on his own resources, and he could not disguise from himself the conviction that this excessive liberality of his brother to his consort and her child would have been very welcome had he been the recipient. Duke George William, however, was not unaware of his brother's exhausted exchequer, and found means, by offering what is now understood by a *consideration*, to be left unshackled in the exercise of his affectionate intentions for the two beings whom he loved best in the world.

CONTENTS OF CHAPTER II.

The Duke of Zelle's liberal intentions respecting Madame von Harburg and her child — His first settlement in their favour—Admirable conduct of the mother of Sophia Dorothea—The Duke shows his sense of it by more handsome settlements—She bears the title of Countess of Wilhelmsburg — Reports respecting these transactions — Anthony Ulrich Duke of Wolfenbüttel — His friendship for the Countess — Sophia Dorothea — Her early intimacy with Count Königsmark—Legal marriage of the Duke of Zelle with the Countess of Wilhelmsburg—Arrangements for sanctioning this union entered into by the Duke and his brother the Bishop—The Assembly of the Estates sanction the marriage—Sophia Dorothea elevated to the rank of princess.

CHAPTER II.

ALTHOUGH his excellent Eleonore within the next few years brought the Duke of Zelle three more daughters, they were but short-lived, and Sophia Dorothea, at a very interesting age of childhood, was left without a rival in the affections of her delighted father. Her mother's admirable conduct continued to strengthen the Duke's attachment, and, knowing how completely she was shut out of the succession to any portion of his dominions, he began to purchase land, for the purpose of having at his disposal a property which he could bequeath to whom he pleased. With this object in view, on the 6th of May 1671, he procured five domains, respecting which he entered into an agreement with the Bishop of Osnabrück on the 1st of September of the same year,—that as

these were his own purchases, the following conditions should be allowed :—

Bishop Ernest Augustus insures to Duke George William the sum of 20,000 thalers,* as well as the sum of 35,000 thalers, lent by the Duke of Wolfenbüttel, on the domain of Fallersleben.

Duke George William is authorised to bequeath the domains Dannenberg and Hitzacker to whom he pleases.

Several conditions then follow respecting the amount of taxes to be levied, the feudal services which the proprietor will have to render to his superior, and other matters of no interest to the reader.

To insure the possession of this grant, Duke George William is within three months to pay 40,000 thalers to Bishop Ernest Augustus, and the future inheritors are to pay the latter 116,180 thalers, in ready money, or allow, in lieu of this, their claims concerning Fallersleben.

It is evident by this arrangement that the suffrages of the worthy prelate were to be had for a good round sum, for which sum he gave a receipt dated 16th October of this year.

* The German thaler is equivalent to three shillings English.

In the settlement of which we have just given an abstract, the disposition of the Duke's property does not transpire, but this was the subject of a second document, bearing the same date as the preceding, and possessing these stipulations.

I.—Duke George William bequeaths the Dannenberg and Hitzacker domains to Madame von Harburg in the manner following.

II.—Both domains with their towns,—with the permission of Bishop Ernest Augustus,—are to be left to Madame von Harburg, and her heirs, as their undoubted property, and to be possessed by them as such.

II.—In accordance with which grant, the servants, during the existence of Duke George William, are to promise to act.

III.—But during the life of the lady, she is to have only one-fourth of the revenues, the rest going to the children.

IV.—In default of issue the whole to revert to the sovereign.

V.—During the minority of Sophia Dorothea the mother is to have the guardianship and administration of the domains.

VI.—Should the latter, however, outlive her

offspring, she is to enjoy, as long as she remains a widow, whatever the property produces, to the last day of her life.

VII.—Should she die childless, or survive her offspring, the estates at her death to revert to the sovereign.

VIII.—Consequently neither herself nor any of her children can mortgage or dispose of any part of the property.

IX.—As regards the capital invested in the Neustadt, Königslutter, Neuhaus, and other domains, the plate, furniture, &c., as well as the house and property, shall be divided, the mother having one portion and the children three.

X.—Madame von Harburg may dispose at pleasure of her portion of the personal effects, but the children, except in a case of great necessity, are not to alienate anything, and finally to leave everything to the sovereign.

XI.—Duke George William reserves to himself the power of adding, diminishing, or revoking this grant.

In these arrangements the Duke's forethought is not less conspicuous than his generosity, for he

must have been well aware that, should any accident happen to him, without his having made a provision for his devoted Eleonore, she was not likely to receive much attention at the hands of his relatives.

Her duty as a mother was as admirably performed as her obligations as a wife. It was impossible to exceed the extreme solicitude she displayed to do everything required of her, in the most perfect manner. This was not lost upon the Duke, who, becoming more deeply interested in the future prosperity of his affectionate partner, became dissatisfied with the arrangements he had already made in her favour, as the title to the property could not be secured in the manner he desired; and in the following year he made others more advantageous to her, which he intended as preliminary to raising her to higher rank. At this time, probably for the benefit of her health, he was staying with her at Pyrmont,* where the documentary evidence of this new settlement is dated on the 14th July, 1672.

* At that time a fashionable watering-place. Its springs still enjoy their celebrity, though less resorted to than other German spas in higher favour with the crowds of idlers who frequent them.

By this it appears that Duke George William resolved to purchase from the Von Grote family, the Stillhorn estate with its appurtenances, together with the Reiherstieg and Schlossgrove, to be at his free disposal, to bestow, in lieu of the Dannenberg and Hitzacker domains, on whomsoever he pleased, with the consent of Bishop Ernest Augustus, and with similar stipulations to those mentioned in a former page. By this arrangement he was to receive the sum of 245,000 thalers for the property, and 35,000 thalers for the exemption from taxes. The Von Grote family were also very handsomely recompensed. Another estate was provided for them. The privy counsellor of the chamber, Otto von Grote, and his brothers had 43,000 thalers, to be derived from the revenues for ten years of the Knesebeck domain, and a further sum of 13,740 thalers, with the right of fishing in the river Seeve. The Duke gave to the counsellor of the treasury, Anthony von Grote, and his brothers, 53,000 thalers, secured by a mortgage on the estate, producing annually 2,900 thalers,—or this sum to be paid from the treasury; and to the sons of Thomas von Grote, a dignitary of the cathedral, a claim on the treasury for 22,000 thalers.

Every arrangement was made to legalise this transfer, and the purchase completed on the 4th of December of the same year,—a deduction, however, of 18,000 thalers was made from the amount promised to the Bishop, on account of the increase the Duke had obtained by his excellent management, of the revenues of the domains he had previously settled upon his lady, who was now distinguished by the title of the Lady Eleonore von Harburg, Countess of Wilhelmsburg.

Still that politic prelate had no reason to be dissatisfied with the profit he was making by his brother's liberality to his *madame;* and showed not the slightest disinclination to put his signature to documents that secured her a handsome provision, as long as he found his own interests thus carefully attended to. His accessibility to such arguments was in a short time to be put to the test in a way that he had probably never anticipated.

The island of Wilhelmsburg, which, with all its honours, rights, and privileges, had thus been made the property of the grateful Eleonore, and at her decease was to become the inheritance of her daughter, Sophia Dorothea, was situated in the Elbe, nearly opposite to Hamburg, and having

been made exempt from taxes was a very valuable property. The only drawback to the many advantages it possessed was its deficiency in fuel, there being scarcely any timber, turf, or coal, to be found on the island. There was also but a moderate supply of game, consisting of a few hares, and partridges, and wild fowl; but Wilhelmsburg was one of the most fertile possessions in the Brunswick-Lüneburg dominions; it afforded capital fishing in various branches of the Elbe, and everything that might be required which the island did not produce could be readily imported from the main-land, or quickly obtained in any quantity from Hamburg; whilst its produce found an excellent market from its vicinity to such an important commercial city.

A property of this consequence, exalting the possessor to high rank and considerable influence, was not transferred without exciting many remarks, not only in the court of his Serene Highness the Bishop, but in those of neighbouring princes. The Duke of Wolfenbüttel,* who was a

* Towards the close of the 16th century, the family became divided into two distinct branches,—one, Brunswick-Lüneburg, the representatives of which subsequently became Electors

cousin of Duke George William of Zelle, and was interested, as a near kinsman, in whatever related to the family, was particularly intimate with the Duke, who regarded his many amiable qualities with sincere esteem. In his frequent visits to Zelle, he had abundant opportunities of forming an acquaintance with the young Countess of Wilhelmsburg, which quickly ripened into a lasting and honourable friendship. The Duke of Wolfenbüttel could not observe without admiration the praiseworthy conduct of his cousin's morganatic consort. He saw that her virtues were worthy of gracing the highest station, and there is little doubt that his favourable opinion,—which he took every opportunity to express to her lord, added to the Duke's appreciation of her great worth,—induced the latter to consider how he could raise her to the highest dignity it was in his power to confer.

At present, although his daughter Sophia Dorothea would inherit a large fortune, and might in consequence, in due time, be well and even nobly married, the equivocal position of her mother, shut

and kings of Hanover,—the other, Brunswick Wolfenbüttel, the head of which has since been the reigning Duke of Brunswick.

out from her all prospect of her forming a princely alliance on a footing of equality. She was but a child, but matrimonial connexions were often determined by prudent parents—as they considered themselves—at an age quite as early as that at which she had arrived.

At this period there were several aspirants for her hand, among the scions of the minor nobility, and of those to whom this honour was most confidently attributed, the chief was the youthful and handsome Count Königsmark, eldest son of the wealthy General Count Königsmark, who was receiving his education at Zelle.* He was about sixteen years of age, and, having frequently been allowed to associate with the daughter of the Countess of Wilhelmsburg, and possessing too the prospect of a noble inheritance, the alli-

* Count Königsmark was not a native either of Zelle or Hanover, but of Sweden, having been born at Nyborg, in the island of Funen. He was a member of a distinguished family. His father, Conrad Christopher, held the office of Minister-General of the Artillery, in the service of Sweden; and his uncle, Otho William, was a marshal in the service of Louis XIV., subsequently distinguished himself in the war of 1672, and became one of the most celebrated military adventurers of that period.

ance was thought by all the sagacious matchmakers in Zelle, as a desirable one for both parties.

Notwithstanding the personal beauty for which even in his early youth the young Count Königsmark was celebrated, it is not very likely that it made any decided impression on the heart of a child scarcely seven years old: nor is it probable that such a youth could have felt any particular interest for a little girl of that age, supposing even she was then unusually interesting. Nevertheless, the childish acquaintance—most probably commenced by the young people having been partners at a juvenile ball—led in their maturer years to consequences more disastrous to the fortunes of both than it is possible to conceive.

If the court-gossips had settled in their own sagacious way, that the intimacy which existed between these children was to end in a marriage, one person at least, of the court, was of a different opinion, and, as the dissentient chanced to be the sovereign, their sagacity was soon proved to be at fault. The frequent despatches between the two illustrious brothers, the constant communications and consultations of their confidential counsellors, and the stir that existed amongst their subordinates

in the preparation of what there could be no doubt were legal documents, prepared the public mind, or rather prepared the mind of these two little German publics, for some extraordinary transaction attended with very important consequences; and when, in the year 1675, the transaction was made known, it was acknowledged to be one of the very greatest importance. It was no other than the arrangement of a legitimate marriage, sanctioned both by the laws and by the church, between the Lady Eleonore von Harburg, Countess of Wilhelmsburg, and his Serene Highness George William Duke of Zelle.

Although this union was in opposition to the promise given to the Bishop, that amiable prelate was induced to proffer his consent to it when he found his interests had been so carefully looked after, as they appear to be in the conditions of the following treaty entered into on this occasion, between him and his brother.

" 1. The Bishop promises not to oppose the said marriage, but will acknowledge and countenance the said Countess, and the children that may be born of this marriage; and also the daughter now living, Sophia Dorothea, agreeing to uphold

her in the possession of her estates, and in her state and rank conferred upon her, and which may be conferred upon her, by the Emperor, and his Serene Highness Duke George William, in so far as such may not be to the prejudice of the heirs of the Bishop, as regards the sovereignty of this Duchy and its appurtenances.

"2. The heirs of the Bishop are bound to respect the Duke's settlement on the Countess and her heirs.

"3. The Duke promises that this marriage shall not be to the disadvantage of the Bishop or his male heirs, on the Duke's death; and his claim of succession as secured by the Duke's written and verbal promises, and the sanction of the Emperor, is confirmed.

"4. Should one or more children be born in this marriage, they are to remain satisfied with the property the Duke, with the consent of the Bishop, may leave them at his decease, and renounce any pretension to the Duchy and its appurtenances, as long as male heirs exist in the Bishop's family.

"5. Neither sons nor daughters born in this marriage can be permitted to make use of the

Ducal coat of arms; but, should Sophia Dorothea marry a prince of ancient family, she will be allowed to use the title and coat of arms of a princess by birth of Brunswick-Lüneburg.

"6. The oath of allegiance of the inhabitants of the Duchy of Lüneburg and its appurtenances, as also that of the civil and military authorities, are to undergo alteration, and the deputies of the country are not to be bound by their oath of allegiance, as far as regards the posterity of Duke George William, respecting which they will be informed by him.

"7. The Duke renounces in the strongest manner all advantages likely to accrue to himself and his children; and if the pretensions of the Bishop and his heirs to the Duchy be called by them in question in any way, such are declared to be contrary to the intention of this agreement.

"8. In further confirmation, and to avoid difficulties, the Duke and the Bishop will implore the Emperor to ratify this contract of marriage, and to append to it the necessary clauses, particularly that his Imperial Majesty and all his posterity do not allow anything to be done against it, that it be enrolled in the imperial courts, and that any

one acting in opposition to it incur a penalty of a thousand marks.

" 9. On obtaining the imperial sanction, the Duke will alter in council the feudal oaths of allegiance, to the manner in which they are to be henceforth administered.

" 10. All privy counsellors, and servants of the government and its domains, all generals, colonels, captains, and commanders, are to ratify this change under their hands and seals. As regards the military, the Duke furthermore promises that, after they have entered their quarters, and when they have been mustered, which will quickly follow, they shall take the oath in the altered form.

" 11. Before this marriage is consummated, the Duke will summon before him the deputies of the country, in the customary manner, and acquaint them with this arrangement, and obtain from them an oath to respect the claims of the Bishop and his descendants; two copies of their agreement to this is to be made, one for the Duke and the other for the Bishop.

" 12. Should the lady be further blessed with offspring, the Duke agrees to publish to all his subjects, that, after his death the succession must

rest with the Bishop, and descend from him, from father to son, according to an arrangement made when the Duke first entered upon the government, as his own offspring will be otherwise provided for at his decease."

In the foregoing stipulation, a great deal is stated respecting the Duke's anxious desire for the peace and welfare of his people having led him to enter into this arrangement, and his hope that after his decease they will be faithful and obedient to the successor whom he has appointed them.

"13. The Duke will settle with the Bishop the feudal rights and usages, and have the nobility and magistrates personally informed of this succession, and forward information to the towns and domains.

"Lastly, the Duke will write to his brother Duke John Frederick, and to his cousin Duke Rodolph Augustus, the necessary information for the benefit of their princely family, with a request that, for the preservation of peace and the good of the country, this agreement may be respected."

After binding their heirs and successors to this instrument, the two illustrious brothers added

their signatures; and it is dated at Zelle, May 15th, 1676.

We cannot here enter into the arbitrary nature of this document, as far as it prejudices the natural claims of any heirs the Duke might have by this legal marriage, and disposes of his subjects without the slightest reference to their wishes: let it suffice that it shows the hard bargain the princely ecclesiastic drove with his brother, before he would permit him to enter into a legal marriage with the lady who had proved herself so worthy of the honour of becoming his Duchess. But this was only one of the documents illustrative of this brotherly compact. The next bears the date of the 21st of August of the same year, and stipulates:

"That the children born of this marriage shall be called Counts and Countesses of Wilhelmsburg, but should Sophia Dorothea marry into a princely family, she should enjoy the title of Duchess of Brunswick-Lüneburg. All that the Duke has bequeathed to them from his allodial estates, and to which no one can prevent their succeeding, to belong to them as their property. Furthermore, ten thousand thalers are to be paid to the Duchess

at the decease of her husband; and she is also to have as a dowry the Castle of Lüneburg, and an annual income of eight thousand thalers. All this, at her death, is to revert to the sovereign; but her unsatisfied claims are to be paid to her heirs."

This document was signed by the Duke and the Bishop, and also by Anthony Ulrick Duke of Wolfenbüttel, who took no ordinary interest in those proceedings. A convocation of the deputies of the country was then assembled, and the contents of the treaties that had been entered into made known to them, as appears from the following paper.

"Be it known, when his Serene Highness George William Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg,* our most gracious sovereign, had assembled his councillors of the country, and others belonging to the states, in his residence, and informed them how his Serene Highness had determined to enter into Christian matrimony with the highborn Lady Eleonore von Harburg, Countess of Wilhelmsburg; that, for particular considerations his Serene Highness had agreed in brotherly manner with his

* All the brothers were designated by the same ducal title.

Serene Highness the Bishop of Osnabrück, Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg, that his daughter Sophia Dorothea, promised to wife to his Serene Highness Augustus Frederick, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, should bear the title and arms of a Princess by birth of Brunswick and Lüneburg, but all sons and daughters born of this wedlock, must content themselves with the title of Counts and Countesses of Wilhelmsburg, and that they are to make no pretensions to the succession, so long as any male heirs of the Dukes of Brunswick-Lüneburg, exist; but at the demise of Duke George William, the said Ernest Augustus, and after him his eldest son, son's son, and so on, male heirs of their body, in accordance with the rights of primogeniture, are to be the successors; and to this end the assent of the emperor has been obtained; and, therefore, the Estates have been assembled, that in their own name, and in that of others, they may bind themselves to conform to and not to oppose it. The said Estates have thereupon deliberated on this subject, and declare as follows:—

"That though they acknowledge with devotion the paternal care and kindness for the

welfare of his faithful subjects, and therefore evince their humility and gratitude, in desiring and imploring the Almighty to prolong the health of his Serene Highness for many years, henceforth to govern his country in peace and happiness; nevertheless, should the Omnipotent Power transplant his Serene Highness into eternal glory, they will keep, and engage in the name of the other Estates to keep, and live in obedience to the said commands of his Serene Highness.

" But since they, in the oath of homage, have promised—should his Serene Highness leave this world, and a son or sons survive,—that they would accept such in succession as their future sovereigns, and as such respect and honour them, they have been induced to request his Serene Highness to be pleased to dispense with their keeping such oath, in so far as it relates to the male heirs in the line of descent.

" As it has been customary in this duchy and province, that on every occasion of paying hereditary homage, the next successor in the government should promise, under his own hand, to keep and confirm the privileges of the Estates, they will not the less live in hopes that his aforesaid

Serene Highness Ernest Augustus, and his heirs, the succeeding Dukes of Brunswick-Lüneburg, will give the same guarantee."

"Whereupon his Serene Highness informed the members of the Estates present, that in this matter their request was granted; and that, in accordance with the contents of the said contract of marriage and brotherly arrangement, as respects the oath of allegiance, his Serene Highness had promised and arranged everything regarding the succession which had been confirmed by his imperial majesty, in consideration of the privileges and other assurances between a sovereign and his Estates, that what had been formerly allowed should be followed, and should not be altered by the brother of his Serene Highness.

"Whereupon the said Estates present, declare themselves to be bound, and herewith bind themselves, in the aforesaid case—which they trust the Almighty may postpone for a long time—that his Serene Highness should quit this world—and even though he should leave sons by the said marriage, that they, the Estates should not acknowledge any prince save the above-mentioned Duke Ernest

Augustus, and on his demise, his eldest son, or son's son, and so on, to their male heirs, according to the right of primogeniture: and that they would take the oath of allegiance accordingly, and as to the rest that they would act, without fail, as good and faithful subjects.

"In witness whereof, this document has been signed by his Serene Highness, and bears the seals and signatures of the councillors of the country.

GEORGE WILLIAM.

Ludolph Otto von Estorff.
Christian von der Wense.
Augustus von Grote.
Julius Augustus von Bothmer.
Christian von Bülow.
Otto von Estorf.
Ludolph Otto von Hasselhorst.
Cord von Bülow.
Johan Dietrich von Kettenburg.
Julius Otto von Wittorf.
Christian Diedrich von Harling.
George Ernst von Melzing.
Johann Otto von Mandelsloh.
Werner Herrman Spörke.
Johan Freidrich von dem Knesebeck.
Levin Ernst von Meding.
Georg Werner von Harnhorst.
Christoph Ernst von Gilten.
Friedrich Otto von Dannenberg.
Veit Franz von Hitzacker.
August Friedrich von Hodenberg.
Werner August von Meding.
Magny von Hohnhorst.
Dietrich Ernst von Hohnhorst."

Other signatures of subordinate officials follow.

The nuptial ceremony was performed with due solemnity. The Duke, before all his court, his cousin Anthony Ulrich of Wolfenbüttel, and the assembled spectators, marrying the lady, and from that time forth the fortunate Eleonore d'Olbreuse became the acknowledged consort and rightful Duchess of the sovereign of Zelle.

But if this was an important change for the mother, it was equally so for the daughter, for it at once placed the young Sophia Dorothea in the rank of princesses, and elevated her far above the hopes of Count Königsmark and other noble suitors, for whom, by popular report, her hand had been destined.

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CHAPTER III.

It might be presumed from what has already been shown of the career of the admirable mother of Sophia Dorothea, that at this period of it she could not have had a wish ungratified. She had attained the highest elevation to which she could have aspired, and her only child, to whose education she devoted those talents which had gained for her the reputation of being the most accomplished woman of her age, had become an object of interest to many of the most powerful princes in Germany. Such of these sovereigns as had sons were extremely desirous of an alliance with the important family of Brunswick-Lüneburg. Eager, however, as they were to put forward their pretensions, they were forestalled in a quarter which, as they quickly discovered, left them no chance of success.

The steady and valuable friendship of the Duke of Wolfenbüttel had made a deep impression on the heart of the grateful Duchess of Zelle, and, as soon as such an arrangement became desirable, she exerted all her influence over her husband,—with whom, at this time, her slightest wish seemed a law—to gain his consent to the betrothal of his daughter with the eldest son of his cousin. To this the Duke at first was disinclined, wishing to defer it till the Princess was older, but the Duchess ultimately overruled his objections, and with a degree of ceremony worthy of the importance of the occasion, the Princess Sophia Dorothea was betrothed to Augustus Frederick, Crown Prince of Wolfenbüttel, who was to receive with her a fortune of 100,000 thalers from the territory of Zelle; and though he was not to inherit the duchy, all the allodial estates and their appurtenances were to become the property of the Princess. This betrothal is acknowledged in a document quoted in a preceding page.

The satisfaction which the Duchess enjoyed from this arrangement unfortunately lasted but a short time, for the very promising son of her estimable friend was wounded in the head by a ball at the

siege of Philippsburg, on the 9th of August, 1676, of which he died nine days subsequently. This was a heavy disappointment, but it was only the first of a series of annoyances, that, now she had attained the summit of her ambition, threatened to fill her position with discomfort, insult, and misery.

In Zelle, so high was her reputation, that it was impossible to exceed the respect with which she was treated; and in many of the neighbouring states the fame of her virtues occasioned her name to be regarded with the greatest consideration. The court of the Bishop of Osnabrück appeared to be the only place where she was spoken of disrespectfully. That worthy prelate was carrying on his political intrigues with more ardour than ever; and, notwithstanding the advantages he had derived by her marriage into his house, if he ever did give a thought of the consort of his brother, it was sure to be attended with a sneer. Though she was rightful Duchess, she was still slightingly spoken of among his confidants as his brother's *madame;* and his family studiedly withheld from her that respect to which she was so well entitled.

The Bishop appears to have held Louis the

XIVth as his model,—on a reduced scale imitating that magnificent monarch's love of show, and on a scale still lower displaying a like talent for political government. But, as the court of Louis Quatorze would have been nothing without a bevy of royal mistresses, the careful copyist seems to have taken due pains that in this respect Osnabrück should approach as nearly as possible to Paris. He soon discovered that there was not wanting a sufficiency of fair dames in his see, frail enough to be qualified for the important posts he desired them to fill.

The appearance of the Bishop at this time could not have been in a superlative degree attractive to female eyes, as his countenance was becoming marked with the impress of age, and was much too stolid for a lover of fair ladies, and too heavy for an imitator of Louis le Grand. Yet he found these deficiencies no impediments with the unprejudiced aspirants for his favour. Those individuals of the sex who were most ambitious of obtaining his notice, possessed minds of a stamp that cared not for finding in the aspect of a royal patron any evidence of the nobility of his station. It was quite sufficient for their purpose that he

was sovereign of the country, and the dispenser of its honours and rewards.

Among the ladies who presented themselves at the court of this royal Bishop about this period, were the two handsome daughters of Count Carl Philip von Meisenberg, — Clara Elizabeth and Catherine Marie. Their education had just been completed, and every pains had been taken to render it quite *à-la-mode*. That is to say, with no very distinct principles, and no decided religious impressions, their minds were filled with the wisdom of French romances, and their hearts stored with the morality of French gallantry. They dressed, danced, looked, and complimented in the most effective manner. They appear to have come to the episcopal court with the laudable object of doing there the best that they could for themselves; and they soon allowed it to be made known that they were not very scrupulous as to the means they should employ for their own advancement.

As respects their utter want of principle, they were much alike, but as regards their talent for intrigue, the elder sister was so far superior, that the other was a mere child in comparison. There

are instances enough on record of the extraordinary degree of cleverness in doing evil that a badly-disposed nature may attain,—and at that very period the Mesdemoiselles Meisenberg had several female contemporaries, who, by the exercise of the rarest talents for evil-doing, had contrived to raise themselves to the highest eminence in their profession; but Elizabeth, the elder of these syrens, possessed a genius for everything that was vile, which placed either contemporaries or predecessors very far behind her. In her were combined the subtlety of a Montespan with the treachery of a Marie de Medicis. She, too, had probably heard of the fame of Louis XIV., and was not disinclined to assist the Bishop of Osnabrück in his endeavour to resemble so famous an encourager of female merit.

It is recorded that the first time these young ladies distinguished themselves was on the occasion of a *fête* in the year 1673, given in honour of the return to Osnabrück of the two sons of the Bishop Ernest Augustus, the Princes George Lewis, and Maximilian, with their governors, Messrs. Platen and Busche, when they composed a little entertainment in French, entitled " Pas-

torale pour regaler Messeigneurs les jeunes Princes de Brunswick-Lüneburg, &c., à leur arrivée a Osnabrugge, &c., Ordonnée par Mesdemoiselles von Meisenberg."

The young ladies, in the dress of shepherdesses, recited this poem to the young princes and their governors, and sought every means, by the display of their attractions, to make a lasting impression on their audience. Both Platen and Busche were rising men at court, whose prospects were very favourable: and flattery was not spared in the course of this loyal effusion, to make it palatable to the masters as well as to their pupils. The entertainment went off with a success that must have fulfilled the most sanguine anticipations of the fair performers. The Crown Prince appeared quite delighted with the younger sister, and his governor was equally so; in short, the youthful Catherine had fascinated both master and pupil. The more talented Elizabeth did not so evidently captivate the younger Prince, but so completely did she charm his instructor that his heart became entirely her own from that hour.

The brothers soon after proceeded to finish their education with a little military service, for

which the elder shewed a marked predilection; but Catherine Meisenberg had made an impression on the youth which was not destined to fade very soon. Whether M. Platen was aware of the state of his pupil's feelings, has not transpired, but he seems to have been well acquainted with the condition of his own, and to have lost no time in endeavouring to make the lady interested in them. She considered well the advantages that she should derive by marrying a man who already held a situation of considerable trust at court. She studied his disposition, and found it to be exactly what she would most strongly desire in a husband; and his principles were of that peculiar elasticity that would bear almost any degree of stretching, without their creating the slightest apprehension of injury to his own interest.

In a short time, Elizabeth Meisenberg became Madame Platen, and she was soon able to congratulate herself upon the excellence of her judgment, in having selected one of the very few men to be found throughout the whole German continent, capable of becoming the sort of instrument which it was her object to make him. This marriage was soon followed by that of Catherine to M. Busche,

and the sisters had scarcely gained their position as married women, when they employed all their resources to attract notice towards themselves by outdressing all the most distinguished ladies at court, and by outintriguing all the most intriguing women in the same high circle. The elder was, as she had hitherto been, the director and leader in all the various schemes and arts to which recourse was had to advance these unprincipled women in their career: the younger was content to follow and to submit herself, entirely and without question, to the powerful genius of the other.

They put themselves forward on every possible occasion, and, being women of a showy appearance, dressing in a style of unusual splendour, and possessed of elegant and graceful manners, with the gayest and most unreflecting portion of the society they shortly became extremely popular. Platen, from the service of the heir apparent, was promoted to a confidential office about the person of the sovereign, and subsequently was elevated to the responsible office of minister. This was highly gratifying to his ambitious wife. It brought her within the circle where she had so intensely longed to be one of the most powerful. She

more fully opened her views to her sister, who readily offered her most active co-operation. Her own husband, also, was pressed into the service, and a singular service he was expected to perform.

Platen was frequently consulted by the Bishop, who was greatly impressed in his favour by his apparent zeal, and excessive devotion to his interests; and it was his task to mention, as though a matter of conversation only, certain remarks, on matters of political importance, which his wife had made from time to time. These apparently evinced so much discernment, and showed such a remarkable interest for the State, that the Bishop began to be curious to see and converse with a female possessed of so strange a talent for government. A situation was quickly found for Madame Platen about the person of the Duchess, which afforded facilities for frequent communication between her and her sovereign.

This was an important advance. She put forth all her fascinations; she displayed her conversational talents, which were very considerable, in the most effectual manner, and exhibited not only a most intense interest in the prosperity

of the government of Bishop Ernest Augustus, but showed a sympathy still more flattering for his happiness. The old gentleman was at once astonished and fasciuated, and the power that the widow of Scarron gained over the great King, threatened to be exceeded by the influence which the wife of M. Platen was exercising over his weak-minded imitator.

But Madame Platen had few feelings, or perhaps we should say, failings, in common with the pious mistress of Louis XIV.; she was much more of a Ninon de l'Enclos than a Madame de Maintenon: but in an insatiable ambition, in carelessness of every moral obligation, she was at least equal, if not superior to that extraordinary character. The Frenchwoman was, however, the more respectable personage of the two, and used her influence, improper as it may have been, in a manner as different as possible from the elaborate treachery and brazen impudence, which displayed itself in the intrigues of the now powerful mistress of his Serene Highness the Bishop of Osnabrück.

The annals of court intrigue contain many examples of unprincipled women maintaining an absolute ascendency over the mind of a sovereign

apparently near his dotage, to the obstruction of justice, and the dishonour of the government. We have only to allude to what lawyers would pronounce "a case in point," existing in our own history, to be found in the connexion of the venerable hero, Edward III., with Dame Alice Perrers. According to some of our most plain-speaking old chroniclers, Dame Perrers and Madame Platen bore an extraordinary likeness to each other.

Fortunately for us, court favourites of this sort have not occurred very frequently in our history; but, in the French annals, mistresses appear to have been thought a much more necessary appendage to the State than queens; and Madame Platens may be found, by the half-dozen at least, in almost every reign. They had flourished rarely of late years, and were so completely in accordance with the genius of the French people, that, in the most popular reigns—for instance those of Henri Quatre and Louis Quatorze—they sprouted up like mushrooms in a meadow. They had become a fashion in France, and, with other French fashions readily found a footing at some of the German courts. They had found more

than a footing at Osnabrück, and it seemed to be the design of the Bishop's mistress, as soon as she had completely established herself at court, to render petticoat influence as predominant at the episcopal palace of that ancient see as ever it had been at Versailles.

With this object in view, Madame Platen carefully instructed her sister, Madame Busche, in the arts necessary for her to gain the same kind of ascendency over the Crown-Prince, as she had obtained over his father. Court intrigues bear usually a most immoral aspect, but we cannot call to mind anything so vile in the most depraved court as the abominable conduct of these married sisters, in thus entering into a compact to lend themselves to the licentious inclinations of father and son.

In the mean time, the lovely Sophia Dorothea was fast rising into an accomplished and graceful womanhood. No pains had been spared with her education, which, having been directed by her mother, who was, as we have said, one of the best educated women throughout Germany, it cannot be deemed extraordinary that, wherever her name was mentioned, her talents were quite as

much lauded as her beauty. Count Königsmark —if he had ever aspired so high, which is at least questionable—saw the complete hopelessness of success in such a suit. He may have been allowed access to the Princess occasionally at the court entertainments, during his residence at Zelle, and continued among her acquaintance, but he must have seen that such an intercourse could only be prolonged at a very respectful distance. He entered the army, and devoted himself to a military career with an ardour that appeared to foretell very splendid success. He travelled from one court to another, and wherever he stayed he succeeded in establishing for himself a splendid reputation, for his remarkably handsome appearance, his costly style of living, his excessive liberality, and apparently exhaustless wealth.

The Princess was now an object for the active rivalry of the most powerful princes in Northern Germany. We have elsewhere alluded to her early betrothal and its unhappy result. The death of the Crown-Prince of Wolfenbüttel, left the field open to the marriageable sons of other sovereigns. The Duchess Eleonore was much concerned at the loss which her estimable friend had

experienced in the loss of his gallant son, but she still cherished the same wish for an alliance between their families—a wish ardently reciprocated by the Duke of Wolfenbüttel: who, as soon as circumstances would allow, proposed that his second son, Prince Augustus William should take the place of his deceased brother, as an accepted suitor for the hand of the Princess.

The Duchess of Zelle warmly seconded his views, and advocated them to her husband; but Duke George William possessed a mind easily influenced by prejudices of the most childish character, and these prejudices, when once they had made their impression, the more they were combated the more fixed they became. Like other members of his family, though capable of generous impulses, he was quite as readily to be swayed by some of a very opposite kind, and those that were in any way connected with pride and self-love, were sure to be of that intensity which characterize the impulses of vanity acting upon a narrow mind.

The Duke of Zelle looked upon the death of his intended son-in-law as an omen, and was reluctant to receive another member of his cousin's

family in the same position. He made various excuses, and on different pretences deferred the desired betrothal of his daughter to the young Prince; but as he did not positively forbid the alliance, and as he allowed the young people to associate on the footing of lovers, all those most interested in the matter rested satisfied with his assurances that he had no positive objections to the match, and that on the Princess arriving at an age when she might be thought capable of judging for herself, he would not interfere with her inclinations should they be in favour of the son of his old friend and kinsman.

The Princess Sophia Dorothea was now approaching that delightful period in woman's existence that divides girlhood from womanhood, and showed to what sterling advantage the superintending care of her accomplished mother had been applied. Her education had been rendered as perfect, as the resources of her father's court and her father's wealth could supply. She was eminently skilled in whatever was deemed desirable a lady of the highest rank should know. She gave promise of more than ordinary mental capacity, and was gifted with a most lovely coun-

tenance, and a figure of faultless symmetry, which a natural grace and a gentle and amiable disposition clothed with a thousand additional attractions. Her dancing was worthy the daughter of a Frenchwoman, and the same graceful spirit pervaded her every movement: on this appeared to be grafted the high tone of moral feeling, and the just perception of the useful and the good, which render the German character so admirable for all the purposes of sociality.

Her mother enabled the Crown Prince of Wolfenbüttel to obtain as much of her society as must have been sufficient, where nothing prejudicial to a mutual affection existed, to dispose them to form an attachment; and she endeavoured by all means in her power to impress the mind of each with favourable sentiments of the other. It was scarcely possible for the Prince to be insensible of the beauty and worth of his young kinswoman; and, although she had opportunities of beholding many other youthful noblemen of the highest rank, equally prepossessing in their appearance, there can be but little doubt that the more friendly intimacy she enjoyed with Prince Augustus William, and the influence of her mother's

wishes, enabled him to gain a degree of footing in her favour, which none of his rivals had the slightest chance of obtaining.

It was now close upon the time when, in accordance with the repeated excuses of Duke George William to defer the consideration of the subject, the Princess would attain the age at which she would be allowed to exercise her own judgment in the choice of a suitor, and all the parties most interested were delighting themselves with the pleasant prospects that seemed to open before them. The young Prince was enraptured by the conviction he entertained, that he was not indifferent to the Princess. The Duke his father congratulated himself on the near approach of so desirable an alliance. The Duchess Eleonore felt equal gratification in the hopes in which she indulged, that she would still be enabled to evince her gratitude to her friend by advancing the interests of his family; and the young lady had, no doubt, her pleasing anticipations from the close approach of the time when she might enjoy the valuable privilege of selecting a lover who was agreeable to herself, and approved of by her parent.

The Duke of Zelle appeared to be the only person in his court who evinced no transports, and uttered no favourable anticipations of the happiness in store for his daughter. He had not sought to interpose between the young people; but he was not, as we have said, favourable to their union. He had, however, made up his mind that on his daughter's birth-day, if she so desired it, the betrothal should take place.

It was at this crisis that the most complete disappointment to the wishes of the little party at Zelle, was preparing from a quarter whence such a blow could not have been anticipated by any of them. The court of Hanover was now the focus of feminine intrigue: Madame Platen ruling as completely in the cabinet as in the saloon. As she professed to take an amazing interest in whatever affected the Brunswick-Lüneburg family, it was necessary for her to show in some decided manner the zeal she pretended. She knew the Bishop looked with great jealousy upon the intimacy that existed between the Duke of Wolfenbüttel, and his brother, at Zelle, and that any alliance between the families was extremely distasteful to him, for the approach it

offered Duke Antony Ulrich towards a settlement of certain claims he had on Lüneburg, the whole of which territory the Bishop looked on as his own.

Madame Platen was well aware of all that was doing at Zelle. She had spies there who were well paid by her, and were therefore not likely to withhold any intelligence of importance. The Crown Prince of Hanover, it is true, she had turned over to her sister; and as she had learned that the grand object with her liberal sovereign and protector was a marriage commensurate with his heir's magnificent prospects, she did not hesitate about taking him out of the hands of Madame Busche the moment she found it less to her advantage to retain him there. Possibly she may have anticipated keeping up the amiable connexion, quite as comfortably after his marriage as before it: but she knew that his father had so completely set his heart upon his forming an alliance that should increase the territory now in the possession of the family, that he would think no reward too great for her insuring it.

But the Crown Prince has not as yet been pro-

perly introduced to the reader, and as he will be found very shortly taking a prominent part in the transactions that will presently be related, it is time they were better acquainted.

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CHAPTER IV.

GEORGE LEWIS, eldest son of Ernest Augustus and the Princess Sophia, was born at Osnabrück on the 28th of May, 1660. There was either no great pains taken with his education, or there existed in him no particular capacity for study. Perhaps both these causes may have contributed to form a very narrow understanding, for that parent to whom the son is usually indebted for his first impressions, although she put forth pretensions to considerable learning, and affected a vast liking for the society of eminent scholars, loved her ease too much to give herself much trouble in endeavouring to form the minds of her children. Those writers who have alluded to her, speak highly of her attaiments, but even from them it is easy to perceive how unfit she was to perform the most important duties of a mother.

" The Princess Sophia," says Dean Lockier,

" was a woman of good sense and excellent conversation. I was very well acquainted with her. *She sat very loose in her religious principles*, and used to take a particular pleasure in setting a heretic (infidel?) whenever she could meet with such, and one of her chaplains disputing together."

At such a court as this, where the father was a profligate, and the mother little better than an atheist, their associates and dependants were not likely to have been the most exemplary characters, and therefore we are not much surprised that Prince George, very early in his career, distinguished himself by qualities the reverse of amiable and intelligent. The importance of his position he was soon made to understand, but he never could be brought to comprehend the necessity of his acting in a manner consonant with it. As he showed neither taste nor ability for the lessons of his tutor, he was sent to the army as soon as he could handle a weapon; and in his fifteenth year we find him serving under his father in the brilliant campaign of 1675.*

* The Bishop of Osnabrück was far more distinguished for his military, than for his ecclesiastical services, as we have

He saw plenty of active service, for he was present at the battle of Consarbrück, and at the taking of Treves. Fighting he liked a great deal better than learning, in fact better than anything else, for after his first campaign he appeared to find no pleasure but in the camp, and rarely left the army, but to hurry back again whenever there was a prospect of active service. In this way he visited different parts of Europe, to which, had he not been attracted by the clamour of war, he would not have troubled himself to learn their names. Hungary, the Morea, Germany, and Flanders, were, at various periods, the scenes of his military adventures, till the peace of Ninieguen in 1679, when he extended his travels by visiting France, England, and other countries.

His travels now, however, had much more of a political than of a military character. At the Court of France the Prince was required to endeavour to improve, as far as possible, his father's relations with the sovereign; but at the Court of St. James's, his was a much more delicate and difficult mission. It was no other than to appear

hinted in a preceding page, and took an active part in many a hard-fought campaign.

as a suitor for the hand of the Princess Anne, daughter of King James the Second.

Among the crowd of princes who were anxious to obtain so desirable a consort, Prince George Lewis of Hanover was inclined to put himself in the front rank. The royal adventurer strove to attract this august lady's attention, but whether it was he was not so refined a courtier as he was an able soldier, or there were at the Court of St. James's, individuals with whose society and appearance the Princess was better pleased, his suit did not prosper. It would have been somewhat extraordinary if it had,—the Prince having never, during his life, showed any predilection for female society, except that portion of it in which it was a disgrace to him to mingle. The Princess must have been more amused than surprised by his addresses; and the ladies of her father's court, there is no doubt, found infinite entertainment in the awkward efforts of the German lover of her Royal Highness to render himself acceptable to her.

But though the Princess Anne declined him for a husband, his visit to England was not altogether unprofitable, for one of the universities did him the honour of conferring upon him the distinction of Doctor of Laws.

Duke John Frederic, the sovereign of Calenberg, died on the 15th of December, 1679. Bishop Ernest inherited his territories, that formed the south-western portion of Brunswick-Lüneburg, of which Hanover was the capital. The follies and vices of the episcopal court at Osnabrück, were now transferred to the Ducal Court of Hanover; and with Platen prime minister, and his worthless wife prime favourite, the new seat of government soon became the scene of more discreditable proceedings than had disgraced the old one.

The Bishop had been diligently engaged in seeking every means of aggrandizing his family, and had entered into additional arrangements with his brother Duke George William, which, while seeking advantages for the Duchess Eleonore and her daughter, still further secured the succession to himself and his heirs.

We have alluded to the scornful manner in which he treated his brother's consort. It attracted the attention of the Duke; who, on the 13th day of July, 1680, arranged a new treaty, by which the Duchess was allowed the title of Duchess of Brunswick-Lüneburg. This was signed, as in the previous instance, by the sovereign of Zelle, and the

assembled states; but a more important settlement was arranged by the illustrious brothers on the 30th of March 1682; wherein, Duke George William leaves his share of the Thedinghausen domain, the country between the Weser and the Aller, with all its rights and privileges, to Ernest Augustus, on the most favourable terms possible to the Ducal ecclesiastic, who was diplomatist enough to make excellent bargains with his brother. In this document, Ernest Augustus still more strongly sanctions the previous arrangement regarding the lordship of Wilhelmsburg.

Notwithstanding the security he had gained regarding his succession to his brother's dominions, Ernest Augustus continued to observe with great uneasiness the confidential intimacy existing between his brother and Anthony Ulrich, Duke of Wolfenbüttel. The wife of his prime minister—now regarded as an oracle of diplomacy—made use of a favourable opportunity for disclosing to him, with arguments that brought with them immediate conviction, the policy of his disappointing the expectations of Duke Anthony Ulrich, whose proceedings at Zelle had been carried on

with a great deal of mystery; nevertheless, Madame Platen, by her spies, had discovered that an interview had taken place in the year 1682, between the cousins, when they agreed that the Crown Prince of Wolfenbüttel should marry the Princess Sophia Dorothea: and although this agreement was to be kept secret, the preparations that were making at Zelle, and the expected arrival there of the young Prince, made the affair very clear to the comprehension of the shrewd wife of the prime minister.

Madame Platen easily alarmed her patron by a disclosure of the evil effects that must result to his family from the contemplated marriage; and then proceeded to show how secure he might make himself of all his brother's possessions, as well as—a natural consequence of such an addition to his territory—obtain still more important acquisitions and honours, that would be sure to follow. With the assistance of her husband, she had learned as much as could be known of the dispositions of those persons in Duke George William's service, who were supposed to be in his confidence, or exercised any influence over his affairs. These were, Bülow, president of the chamber, Grapen-

dorf, a lord of the bed-chamber, and Stechinelly, a counsellor; but with true policy, she passed over these as inferior instruments, and boldly sought to gain her ends through the medium of the Duke's prime minister; a vain weak man, whose pride and avarice laid him open to the snares of so skilful a tempter. His name was Bernstorf, his principles sat very loosely upon him, and Madame Platen soon discovered how easily he might be made to play the traitor.

We have already alluded to the influence the Duchess Eleonore was enabled, by the mere exercise of a superior understanding, to exert over her husband. This had frequently been felt at the council, for the Duke appreciating his consort's clear-sighted intellect, consulted her on matters of the greatest importance, and often followed her advice in opposition to the judgment of his minister. The latter regarded this as an intolerable humiliation, and one motive of his ready compliance with the nefarious schemes of the wife of his friend, the prime minister of the sovereign of Hanover, was a desire to put an effectual stop to that very irksome interference in his duties he had so often been obliged to endure from the Duchess. Madame

Platen was well aware of the jealousy and ill-feeling with which Bernstorf regarded the consort of his sovereign; she was also quite as well informed how completely his heart was set upon becoming a great landed proprietor; and she showed Ernest Augustus how readily he might play upon this jealousy, and gratify this hankering for a handsome estate, with great advantage to himself.

The Bishop listened with extreme interest. He saw at once how singularly advantageous it would be for him to have his eldest son marry the Princess Sophia Dorothea, and how very likely he was to succeed in this, could he gain over to his interests his brother's chief counsellor. He did not hesitate in sanctioning an immediate engagement of the ready traitor, with a retaining fee in the shape of a gold snuff-box, set with diamonds from himself, and gave as willing a consent that promises should be held out to him, of extensive additions to his landed property, provided he acted as he was desired.

Madame Platen lost no time in availing herself of the directions she had received. Confidential communications were at once opened with Bernstorf, who took his bribe with very little pressing,

and displayed an extraordinary eagerness to turn traitor as soon as he found how greatly it might be to his advantage. He was instructed to draw the Duke's attention to the public dissatisfaction that existed throughout his territories, caused by the excessive patronage which, through the influence of the Duchess, her countrymen had long enjoyed. The proportion of French officers in the army, as was stated, considerably out-numbered the Duke's subjects holding commissions. He was also to alarm the Duke's pride by making him aware of the respect he was losing among the rulers of Germany, by allowing his consort to render it apparent that she exercised the sovereign influence, while he was content to be kept in the back-ground.

In short, every plan was adopted that could have any effect upon a weak mind, and it so far succeeded with the Duke, that Bernstorf was emboldened to remonstrate with his sovereign, when the latter showed a determination to act on the suggestions of his consort, and even went so far, though the affair was managed with great tact, of opposing her opinion whenever he discovered that she had been endeavouring to induce

her husband to adopt certain measures. He particularly set himself in opposition to the intended marriage of the Princess Sophia Dorothea with Prince Augustus William of Wolfenbüttel, and as it was never cordially sanctioned by her father, he found little difficulty in producing arguments against it, that made it appear still more unsatisfactory.

Although the Duchess, as soon as she perceived that her husband's disinclination to this alliance had increased, did everything in her power to induce him to regard it more favourably, she had the mortification of finding that her reasoning and her persuasions were now equally ineffectual. The betrothal of her daughter to the Crown Prince of Wolfenbüttel, which was to have taken place on her attaining her fourteenth year, was deferred till she arrived at her sixteenth. This was a great disappointment to the amiable Duchess—nevertheless she continued with the same extreme care to develop the mind of the Princess, and had the gratification of witnessing the most perfect success that ever crowned the efforts of a loving mother. The Princess became a model of propriety of conduct, while her extreme personal loveliness continued to excite the most marked admiration·

Prince Augustus William was not allowed such frequent intercourse with the Princess, as had been permitted before Bernstorf received his diamond-set gold snuff box—nevertheless so much communication was carried on between the parties, as sufficed in their young and ardent minds to keep up a lively interest for each other.

So passed the time till 1682, when the secret interview alluded to in a preceding page was arranged between the two cousins, in which the sovereign of Zelle allowed himself so far to be influenced by the representations of his old friend and kinsman, as to promise that his daughter's inclinations should alone be his guide, in the choice of a partner for her, and at last allowed Duke Anthony Ulrich to leave him with the impression that he sanctioned the intended union. Although it was determined that this interview and the arrangement should be kept a profound secret, Bernstorf had early intimation of them, and immediately despatched a messenger to Hanover with the intelligence.

Ernest Augustus was alarmed at this apparent success of the Duke of Wolfenbüttel, and his jealousy of his cousin was ably played upon by his

subtle friend, Madame Platen. Finding him in a state of mind ready to snatch at any plan affording a chance of disappointing the expectations of Duke Antony Ulrich, that clever *intriguante* referred to her scheme by which he might act in a manner highly advantageous to his own family, whilst he put it out of the power of the Duke of Wolfenbüttel to interfere with his views. He saw that by the union of his eldest son with his brother's daughter, the two Duchies might be united into one government, and a vast accession of influence, as well as other important advantages, arise to the sovereign of Hanover.

The plan was a capital one; but it unfortunately happened that the Crown Prince had at this period been sent by his father, as we have shown, in pursuit of even higher game, and was as actively employed as a person of his habits was likely to be, in making himself agreeable to the future Queen of Great Britain. The communications the politic father had received of the progress his son was making in the affections of the Princess Anne were far from encouraging, and Ernest Augustus, in the sudden conviction he might be more profitably employed nearer home

sent a recall, couched in terms likely to obtain the most implicit obedience.

Although no time was lost by the Crown Prince in quitting the Court of St. James's, he returned to Hanover when the part he was expected to play looked so difficult of successful accomplishment, that on being made fully acquainted with all that was required of him, he could not be prevailed upon to proceed. So short a time now intervened before the Princess would attain her sixteenth year,—when she was to give her hand to the Crown Prince of Wolfenbüttel,—that the case seemed quite desperate for any new suitor. Prince George Lewis did not like the almost certain prospect that existed of a refusal from the young lady, to any new rival of her youthful kinsman, and could not be brought to risk such a discomfiture. The affair seemed every hour becoming more hopeless,—but surrounded as it was by difficulties, it served only the more to excite the genius of Madame Platen. She met them in a manner that would have done honour to the craft of a Machiavelli.

Mention has been made of the Duchess Sophia, the consort of the sovereign of Hanover,

—an eccentric woman of strange unwomanly thoughts and habits. She must have been well aware of the improper intimacy existing between her husband and the wife of his prime minister, yet she took no notice of it, and even appeared to regard that lady with unusual marks of favour. Whether her spirit was so wrapped in profound scholarship, that she regarded the goings on around her as too trivial for her attention, or whether, in return for being allowed to enjoy the society of the learned Leibnitz,* she permitted her husband

* Leibnitz had the singular good fortune of being patronised by three generations of the Brunswick-Lüneburg family, and has expressed his gratitude by becoming their chronicler. The first volume of his elaborate history of the house of Brunswick was published in the year 1707; a second and third in the years 1710, 1711. He was far more regarded by the females of the family than the males, who had about as much taste for learning as they seem to have had for decency. The consort of Ernest Augustus affected a wonderful degree of pleasure in his society, and the Queen of her grandson George II., appeared equally gratified with it. Leibnitz was undoubtedly a man gifted with a noble intellect, but he weakened its vast power by engaging in too many pursuits. "He attempted more than he could finish," says Gibbon, "and designed more than he could execute; and he may be compared to those heroes whose empire has been lost in the ambition of universal con-

to possess as many mistresses as he pleased, and was ready to bestow as much of her notice upon them as might be necessary, we have no means of ascertaining. It is, however, completely established that few women ever appeared so indifferent to the vices of their husbands as did this erudite daughter of the Queen of Bohemia. She had hitherto taken affronts with a most marvellous degree of patience—she was now to show how able a coadjutor she could become of her husband's mistress, and how readily she could lend herself to work out the schemes of her wily diplomacy.

There was not a minute to lose. On the morrow the birth-day of the Princess would be celebrated, and it was known that Duke Anthony Ulrich and his son would arrive at Zelle in the morning, for the purpose of claiming her hand, according to the secret arrangement. It was necessary she should start at once. If she deferred her journey till the morning, there was every reason for fearing she might arrive after the Duke of Wolfenbüttel, and therefore too late

quest." He died at Hanover in the year 1716, of an attack of gout.

for a private interview with Duke George William, in which she was to dissuade him from that alliance.

The Duchess, as soon as she had learned her lesson, started off late that evening, and travelled all night.* As had been previously arranged, she reached Zelle so early in the morning that the Duke was employed at his dressing-room table, and the Duchess was in the adjoining chamber not yet risen. She fulfilled her instructions by at once making her way there, and got admitted into the dressing-room by announcing herself as come expressly to congratulate the happy parents on the birth-day of their daughter. Both the Duke and Duchess were surprised at her extreme kindness in travelling all night to be the first to offer her congratulations, and were profuse in their acknowledgments. The close vicinity of the Duchess Eleonore, who had so warmly favoured the hopes of the Crown Prince of Wolfenbüttel, might have been a damper on the

* As the distance from Hanover to Zelle is little more than twenty miles, we have, in the stress laid on this formidable journey, a pretty correct idea of the customary rate of travel for illustrious personages in Germany, towards the close of the 17th century.

zeal of a less able ally, but the Duchess Sophia had been prepared for this, and began conversing with the Duke in Dutch, with which language his consort was unacquainted. After obtaining from him a promise not to divulge what she was going to confide to him, she quickly proceeded to inform her brother-in-law of the real object of her visit.

He listened with the most breathless interest to her skilful detail of the numerous great advantages that must arise from an alliance between the two ducal houses of Zelle and Hanover. In consequence of important services rendered the Emperor, she stated that it was not unreasonable to anticipate that the duchy would be raised to an electorate, and, as there existed strong claims on the Lauenburg territory, which there could be little doubt would be made good, the sovereign, whose rule extended over the territories of Lüneburg, Hanover and Lauenburg must become one of the most powerful throughout the German empire. Added to which, by judicious measures, the principalities of Bremen and Verden,* that had been a fruitful source

* These provinces, however, were not secured to the Brunswick-Lüneburg family till the reign of George II.

of disagreement between Denmark and Sweden, which, though to all appearance arranged three years since, was still unsettled, might be an easy acquisition to so powerful a sovereign; and considering the eminent services, both diplomatic and military, the Emperor had received from the Brunswick family, still further additions of territory might be looked for.

The lady here observed how essential it was so large a government should be kept intact, and urged the impolicy of allowing any diminution of it—then coming to the point of her mission, she showed how irrational it would be to permit this noble territory to be deprived of so princely a portion as the Wilhelmsburg domain, (the inheritance of the Princess Sophia Dorothea,) the threatened loss of which might be avoided in the easiest manner possible, by a marriage of the Crown Prince of Hanover with the heiress of that fine property. Then, as if the argument had not already been made sufficiently attractive, the Duchess dilated on the prospect her eldest son had of succeeding to the throne of Great Britain, through her near connexion with the reigning family, and the favourable disposition towards him of the Prince of Orange.

The Duke of Zelle was not only completely convinced by these representations, his mind was dazzled by the brilliant perspective they placed before him; and as oblivious of his promises to his cousin, Duke Anthony Ulrich, as he was regardless of the wishes of his consort,—who, surprised at the long conversation being carried on in a language with which she was unacquainted, had vainly made frequent attempts to learn the nature of it —he gladly gave the most earnest assurances that he would do everything in his power to effect an alliance so desirable. The clever diplomatist retired—delighted, no doubt, at the perfect success she had obtained,—leaving her brother-in-law to break to his consort, in the best manner he was able, the unwelcome intelligence of the arrangement to which he had bound himself.

The Duchess at first seemed stupified with surprise—the alliance she had laboured so industriously to bring about, now on the very eve of being accomplished, was demolished at a blow. In vain she represented the outrage so sudden a change would be to Prince Augustus William and his father—in vain she implored the Duke to have more respect for his daughter, than to consent to

a marriage of convenience, without in the slightest degree consulting her inclinations—in vain she begged him at least to pause and consider the irremediable mischief that must ensue from the union of two persons who had no affection for each other.

The Duke had been blinded by the splendid prospect he had been suffered to look at, and his sense of hearing had been dulled by the overpowering appeal to his ambition, that had been so artfully prepared for him by the clever wife of his brother's prime minister. He was now deaf and blind to everything, but hastening the preparations for so desirable a marriage; and on the arrival of the Duke of Wolfenbüttell and his son, to fulfil the interesting arrangement they had looked forward to with the most intense gratification, they received the astounding intelligence of the Duke of Zelle's recent change of purpose. The feelings of indignation with which they left the palace may easily be imagined, and though the intimacy which had so long existed between the two cousins was renewed, it was never again restored to the footing it had thus lost.

The Duchess Eleonore was in despair. The

union of her beloved daughter with a prince who had already created for himself an evil reputation by his tendency towards the most vulgar profligacy, was exceedingly repulsive to her; and became the more intolerable when brought in contrast with the more desirable marriage that had been so abruptly put an end to. Prince Augustus William of Wolfenbüttell was in all things the opposite of Prince George of Hanover. In truth it was "Hyperion to a satyr." The former appeared to possess every ennobling virtue, the latter seemed master of almost every degrading vice. A marriage of expediency, under any circumstances, she knew to be a most hazardous speculation of human feelings; but what could result to a young and delicate creature like the Princess Sophia Dorothea, religiously educated and carefully nurtured, whose sympathies had already been excited towards a young and amiable prince, from her union with a coarse-minded, self-willed reprobate, of whom, if she knew anything, it must have consisted of intelligence that represented him in a light as fearful as possible to her pure and gentle nature?

The fond mother shuddered as she asked the

question; but the forebodings of his wise and affectionate partner, were, with the Duke, quite inefficacious when his own thoughtless ambition had received further fuel from the encouraging representations of the treacherous Bernstorf; and, sick at heart, she found nothing was left her but to prepare her daughter for the sacrifice. The marriage was pressed forward with most indecent haste. Little time was left the Princess to get over her disappointment, in losing so suddenly the Prince whose many admirable qualities had won her regard; but her devoted mother represented with so much success the necessity of obedience to the will of her father, and the wisdom of conforming to circumstances, that she became to all appearance resigned to her fate.

In the mood in which the sanguine Duke of Zelle was, the more wily concoctors of this union found no difficulty in obtaining his consent to the most liberal stipulations in the marriage contract that was entered into by the brothers and their children.

In the first place, it is there agreed that Duke George William is to give his daughter a marriage portion of one hundred thousand thalers, with the

estates already settled upon her. If no son is born, these estates, particularly the lordship of Wilhelmsburg is to remain her own; and his Highness binds himself not to alter the arrangements, as to their succession, he has already made. Should the Prince die before his consort, this property and all its revenues are to revert to his widow, that her children may inherit them only after her demise, and as a widow she is to be entitled to a dower of twelve thousand thalers.

Should the Prince die before his father, leaving children by this marriage, then the Wilhelmsburg and its appurtenances are to be inherited by the eldest son, according to the law of primogeniture. Should daughters only be born, then the successors of Ernest Augustus are empowered to take the Wilhelmsburg and its appurtenances on paying the daughters two hundred thousand thalers, in ready money. If one or more male heirs survived and succeed to the Wilhelmsburg, and there should only be daughters in the next generation, or there should be no issue at all, then the successor in the government is at liberty to take that domain, on paying to the said females one hundred thousand thalers in ready money and if

there be more than one heiress one hundred and fifty thousand thalers, to be equally divided amongst them, and to be entirely at their disposal.

This contract was signed by Ernest Augustus and his eldest son, and by Duke George William and his daughter; and all preliminaries having been arranged, the marriage was celebrated with all proper splendour on the 21st of November, 1682.

As a proof of the effect produced by her mother's representations, we quote here the following letter from the Princess Sophia Dorothea—which must have been written between her betrothal and marriage—to her intended mother-in-law, the Duchess Sophia of Hanover. The original, in French, is preserved in the British Museum.—Royal MSS. vol. clx. p. 230.

" Madam,

" I have so much respect for my lord the Duke, your husband, and for my lord my own father, that, in whatever manner they both may act in my behalf, I shall always be very content. Your highness will do me, I know, the justice to believe so, and that no one can be more sensible than I

am, of the many marks of your goodness. I will with much care endeavour, all my life long, to deserve the same, and to make it appear to your highness, by my respect and very humble services, that you could not choose as a daughter, one, who knows better than myself how to pay to you what is due. In which duty I shall feel very great pleasure, and also in showing to you, by my submission, that I am,

" Madam,

" Your Highness's very humble,

" And very obedient servant,

" S. D.

" At Zelle, the 21st of October, 1682."

The Crown Prince did not bring home his bride till the 11th of December, when the festivities that had taken place at Zelle were completely thrown into the shade by the greater brilliancy of those that welcomed the royal couple to Hanover.

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CHAPTER V.

WHEN we read, among the customs of any distant people, of women not being allowed a voice in an engagement of such intense interest to them as marriage, we are apt to regard it as a monstrous abuse of power, betraying the deepest barbarism; and when anything of a similar nature is proved to exist in the union of the sexes in our own vaunted state of civilization, the sympathy it excites amongst us for the victim, is only exceeded by our indignation against all who may be in any way instrumental in producing a state of things so unnatural. Nevertheless, this interference with the dearest privilege of woman is still much too often the fruitful source of connubial misery it has ever been, and certain classes of society have long existed, amongst whom it is scarcely possible that

a marriage should be brought about solely by the mutual inclination of the parties.

Of these classes we need now only point to the highest—comprising those persons whose alliances are affairs of state. Royal marriages, however, are in some respects better managed than they used to be,—opportunities being often allowed for so much of personal knowledge as may induce to the creation of feelings of affection. In times, happily gone by, princes entered into the married state, from politic views alone; we could point to numberless instances in the histories of the principal European nations, where the affections of the lady have been as little cared for as the length of her hair. She was handed over to her royal suitor by her parent or guardian, with no more inquiry into the state of her heart than would have been made had she been a statue intended to decorate his palace.

Knowing this, it is impossible to regard with any great degree of surprise, the profligacy for which the principal courts of Europe used to be famous. It is a natural result of so violent an outrage of the dearest emotions of the human heart, as a marriage without affection. The royal

bride—usually disinclined to such a disposal of herself—soon finds out her real position. She is thought of only as a necessary appendage to the court. No union of sentiment is expected to exist between her and her consort: no bond of common interest connects them together. They become more and more indifferent to each other; the lady finds consolation in the admiration she can direct towards herself; in due time, one barrier after another is overthrown; she renders her name notorious for discreditable intrigues; and the persons among whom she moves become celebrated for their licentiousness and profligacy.

The Princess Sophia Dorothea was the victim of one of the most heartless of state marriages; and if anything could have tended to place her in the same degraded state into which others of her order had sunk, the unceremonious manner in which she had been forced from the Prince who had interested her feelings, into the arms of another who must have been distasteful to her, was surely quite sufficient. But the Princess had received an admirable education under the eyes of a most exemplary mother: this enabled her to

submit with a becoming grace to the will of her parent, and after having submitted to it, to reconcile herself as gracefully to the responsibilities, cares, and annoyances of her new position.

The first years of her wedded life were marked by so striking an amiability, and so perfect a performance of her duties as a wife, that not only did she gain the admiration of her husband, indeed quite as much affection as he was capable of feeling, but created as much genuine regard in the hearts of his parents as they were likely to experience. To the duties of a wife were in due time added those of a mother, in the performance of which she put forth still stronger claims on the esteem of her consort and his family. The former seemed much gratified when the birth of an heir was made known to him, and he expressed his satisfaction by devoting as much time as he could spare to paying to the mother a few of those attentions that are usually looked upon by all affectionate husbands as matters of course. The son of the Crown Prince and Princess of Hanover, was born at Hanover on the 30th of October, 1683, and was christened George Augustus.

The Bishop seemed charmed by the behaviour of his daughter-in-law; her feminine innocence and womanly dignity contrasted refreshingly with the vice that flaunted before his eyes, in the gay and guilty creatures of the same sex, who basked in the sunshine of his favour. He could turn from the contemplation of his ambitious schemes, with an inexpressible enjoyment, in the observation of a young female, so genuine and unaffected, and gladly escape from the craft and subtlety of his petticoat counsellor, to breathe the pure and holy atmosphere that appeared to envelop the person of the affectionate young mother and irreproachable wife.

He still continued in his court to ape the luxury that has made the age of Louis XIV. a proverb. He built with magnificence; he improved unsparingly; he lavished large sums in decorations; and did all within his power to render his residences worthy of a disciple of the grand monarque. Still there were times when, interested as he was in these favourite pursuits, he showed that he preferred the society of his admirable daughter-in-law.

The Duchess Sophia also, immersed as she

chose to appear in learned pursuits, contracted very favourable sentiments towards her son's consort. She continued both blind and deaf to everything tending to place before her, in a proper light, the disgraceful connexions of her husband, but she was not quite so insensible to the virtues of the Princess. The winning amiability of the fond mother made its way to her heart—cold as it seemed to be to all endearing impressions—and even the absorbing interest which she gave to improving her pretensions to the throne of Great Britain, or her apparent devotion to the pursuit of philosophy under the auspices of the learned Leibnitz, failed in rendering her inattentive to the claims upon her regard which were being so irresistibly put forth by her daughter-in-law.

It might be imagined, from this favourable state of things, that notwithstanding the unsatisfactory manner in which her married life had commenced, the consort of the Crown Prince of Hanover had a fair prospect of happiness before her. Yet this was very far from being the case. There was one who watched the felicity of the youthful mother with feelings similar to those experienced by the arch-enemy when gazing on the

happiness of our first parents; and watched with the determination to destroy it. Unfortunately, her power was equal to her malice.

It suited the views of Madame Platen to bring about a marriage between the eldest son of her infatuated lover, and the only child of his brother, because the important advantages which must arise from it to the sovereign of Hanover, she was satisfied would be suitably acknowledged. In this she was not deceived. The Bishop rewarded her liberally, and ennobled her husband. The title of Baron in any of the minor German states, is not one conferring any extraordinary increase of dignity. We have heard of its having within our recollection been acquired by a London tailor, and there is every reason to believe that upwards of a century ago there was often less discrimination exercised in the disposal of honours. In the French court, which was so frequently the model of the German ones, vice might aspire to the highest distinctions in the gift of the crown, and scoundrel Dukes and demirep Duchesses were as common as unwholesome fungi in a rank soil. It is at least to the credit of the sovereign of Hanover, that, in rewarding the deserts of

M. Platen, or, more properly speaking, those of his wife, he conferred on him one of the lowest titles of nobility.

This title, however, joined to the liberal pecuniary gifts to her of the Bishop, and the large fortune the elevated and confidential position of the new Baron enabled him to accumulate, were sufficient inducements for the court favourite to adopt a style of living which threw the establishment of the wealthiest families in Hanover into the shade. Her liveries, equipages, and mansion, rivalled those of the sovereign. Her entertainments were of the most princely description, where expense was lavished without limit, and every luxury introduced that could attract around her the gay courtiers and the handsome young nobles of the duchy. Her dresses were more superb than ever, and she took care to surround herself with the most imposing evidences of a pride and ambition, that the more they were gratified the more intolerant they became in their pretensions.

It was well known in Hanover that the sovereign was not the only person who obtained her favours. Her love of admiration was only

equalled by her inclination for intrigue, and her obsequious husband found himself obliged to entertain at his table a continued succession of his wife's lovers, and it might so happen some two or three at a time, to none of whom—however gracious the lady might be—was he ever known to forget that it was necessary he should keep up before them the amiable character of a host. Many anecdotes were in circulation respecting her profligacy, but these the reader can dispense with. Her jealousy was not less conspicuous, and it was often manifested in a manner that showed how reckless was her malice when once aroused by it.

She possessed in her establishment a female attendant of an agreeable appearance, named Ilse. On one occasion, owing to the negligence of the servants, the Bishop entered her house unperceived by the garden door, and as he met the girl in an ante-room, he prevented her giving the alarm to her mistress, desirng to know where she was to be found, that he might surprise her. Unluckily Madame Platen came unexpectedly into the apartment, and caught her pretty domestic so close to her royal lover that she felt

assured there must be some secret understanding between them. Though burning with hatred and rage, she managed to conceal her feelings till her sovereign had taken his departure. Then her wrath burst forth like a torrent on the head of the innocent girl, whom she accused of every abominable crime; and although Ilse, in the most earnest manner, asserted her innocence, and begged for mercy, her mistress expressed a resolution of inflicting a terrible punishment.

The poor girl was immediately thrown into prison on some trumpery accusation: from this she ultimately got released by making known her determination of appealing to the Bishop in her favour. It so happened that he had left the duchy on a tour. Ilse might have had to lie in prison till his return, but her persecutor, satisfied her vengeance by inflicting on her the most public act of disgrace. The poor girl was drummed out of the town; and although the respectable families were well satisfied of her innocence, they stood in such fear of the power possessed by the wife of the prime minister, and the unscrupulous uses they knew she could put it to, that she was unable to obtain any situation within the territory of Ha-

over. She, however, made her case known to her sovereign at the earliest opportunity; yet the only recognition he afforded her of the injustice he was well aware she had received, was a trifling pecuniary present, and a hint that it would be better for her to leave his dominions. She subsequently found her way to Zelle, where her story having been told to the amiable Duchess Eleonore, she was enabled to secure for herself an honourable asylum.

Among the numerous characters that the Baron Platen's lady aspired to support, that of benefactress to the poor was one which she assumed in a style so peculiarly original, that it deserves the fullest publicity. It had long been whispered that she secretly suffered from a distressing malady which had made its appearance after the birth of her first child, and that she had had recourse to the most costly remedies without deriving from them the slightest benefit. Among other things she had been recommended the luxurious indulgence of a milk bath every morning, and in this she persisted for a considerable period; but to establish her reputation for charity, after she had sufficiently laved her diseased body in the milk, she was so

benevolent as always to have it distributed to the poor, with an adequate portion of bread.

We have said that it suited the views of this artful woman to bring about a marriage between the heir of the sovereign of Hanover, and the heiress of the Duke of Zelle, but she began to perceive within a year or two afterwards, that it did not suit her views to allow them to live happily together; and having made this discovery, she put forth all the resources of her extraordinary genius for mischief, to create between them so much ill-feeling as would render their society mutually intolerable. To this she was led not only by the strong desire her evil spirit felt to mar the happiness she could not fail to observe, but by a feeling of jealousy for the superiority of the object of her dislike she could not fail to feel.

The wife of the prime minister had long reigned at court the most beautiful and the most superbly dressed of all the ladies who appeared there, till the arrival of the youthful consort of the Crown Prince, whose fresh and innocent beauty, and matchless taste, deprived the garish attractions of the ambitious wanton, of the admiration she had hitherto enjoyed unchallenged. Nor could it

be denied that the Princess was as far superior to her in personal advantages as she was in rank. The general recognition of this, and the acknowledgment which forced its way into her own mind, created a jealousy as intense as that which had so nearly ruined the luckless Ilse: but she well knew that the object of it was in a very different position to that in which her disgraced domestic had been placed, and that it would now be necessary to employ other means for securing her revenge than those of which she had then so daringly availed herself.

Her first operations commenced with the Crown Prince. He had hitherto kept up the decencies of married life pretty well. Possibly he may have felt some slight admiration for the beauty and the virtues of his consort: but his was an unstable mind, and his heart had little sympathy with the numberless exquisite feelings that arise out of domestic intercourse. He was frequently with the army, and after the first powerful sense of the worth of the admirable being he had secured, had worn off, it was evident he preferred the stirring life of the camp, to the blessed tranquillity of home. His father's mistress began by flattering his foibles and

administering to his vanity, and her sister was again thrown in his way as much as possible; but Madame Busche wanted talent to regain the influence she had once acquired over the Crown Prince, for notwithstanding her endeavours to attract him, he continued indifferent to her fascinations.

Such was the state of things at the period of the birth of the second child of the Princess Sophia Dorothea, whose confinement was thought by the scheming adventuress who had gained so prominent a place at the court of her father-in-law, an excellent opportunity for carrying out her designs upon the Prince. The daughter of the Princess was born in the year 1686, and was christened Sophia Dorothea.

Finding that her sister had ceased to charm her royal lover, Madame Platen determined on placing in his way a young female of her acquaintance, whose fresher attractions might have a better chance of success. The person to whom she chose to play the part of procuress was Ermengard Melusina von Schulenburg, who was born in 1667. Her appearance at this period was particularly prepossessing, as with considerable pretensions to good looks, she appeared so guileless and modest, that it was scarcely possible to withhold

admiration. She was well drilled by her patroness, for under her apparent gentleness and simplicity was a nature very ready to devote herself to infamy, to fulfil the ambitious dreams that were artfully instilled into her, of having a princely lover.

Mademoiselle Schulenburg, having received her instructions, was introduced to the Crown Prince. She had had the benefit of a clever teacher, and, moreover, she showed herself an apt pupil. The Prince was much gratified with her. Her assumed artlessness and her very engaging manners made a favourable impression upon him. Her figure and features were no less seductive to one whose taste was far from being refined, and he soon made it apparent that he took a more than ordinary pleasure in her society.

The Princess learned that her consort was so engaged with important business, that she could rarely count upon the satisfaction of an interview with him of half an hour. She did not learn that the hours wherein she was dedicating herself with all a mother's devotion to the nurture of her little girl, anxiously expecting the arrival of her husband to cheer her in her confinement, he was

engaged in taking equestrian excursions with Mademoiselle Schulenburg, and in expressing to her a degree of admiration to which it was an insult to her to listen. Yet she not only did listen,—she, in her turn, expressed as warm an admiration of her admirer. They were generally accompanied by the lady of the Baron Platen and her sister—the latter amiably affording her assistance to her young rival in fascinating her royal lover—and one or two male confederates.

The flatteries and blandishments of the women were unsparingly employed; allusion was constantly being made to his gallantry in the field, till it was not their fault if the Prince failed to think himself a Marlborough; and he was quite as plainly told that he was equally irresistible to the ladies as to the enemy, which the blushing Melusina so clearly confirmed, that he must have possessed a great deal more sense than belonged to him, had he doubted his complete omnipotence with the sex.

When it was found that the charms of the innocent and gentle *protegée* of the lady of the Baron Platen had produced their due effect on the Crown Prince, that grand plotter sought to

work out the next stage of her operations by making, through the means of this intrigue, what effects she could upon the Princess.

The lady of the prime minister outwardly paid the daughter-in-law of her sovereign the most devoted respect, and even affected a considerable degree of attachment to her person, yet, in the most artful manner, availed herself of every opportunity covertly to wound her feelings. The Princess regarded her with that intuitive aversion with which the truly virtuous woman always looks upon the immodest of her sex. She was gifted with a superior intelligence, and soon fathomed the favourite's real character, and she invariably treated her with a proud civility that kept her at her distance—and made her feel it. This goaded her still more, and sometimes led her to utter sarcasms, which were retaliated by her superior with an intensity of scorn that humbled her to the dust.

The Princess was attended by a young lady, named Knesebeck, who was devotedly attached to her, and enjoyed her confidence. To her the young mother remarked the rare and hurried visits of her consort, and speculated as to the real

cause of this apparent negligence. Her attendant endeavoured to find apologies for the Prince, on the score of his numerous avocations; but some prophetic sense of evil seemed to intimate to the neglected wife that mischief was impending. She was restless and uncomfortable; and continued her motherly duties to her two infants, while pursuing a train of unpleasant reflections.

About this period, the lady of the Baron Platen paid her a complimentary visit, and after a liberal show of professions of respect and good-will, she proceeded, in her usual crafty manner, to mention the parties she had enjoyed with the Crown Prince and the beautiful Mademoiselle Schulenburg: never failing to dilate on the extraordinary attractions of that young lady, and on the very evident gratification the Crown Prince seemed to take in her society. Then, having planted a dagger in the heart of the virtuous wife, she took her leave with the same profusion of hollow compliments with which she had entered.

About this time Madame Busche lost her husband, but it seemed that she had an invincible repugnance to appearing at court in the unbecoming garb, called widow's weeds; therefore, in an in-

credibly short time after M. Busche's decease, she gave every possible encouragement to the addresses of General Weyke, and both parties agreeing to unite their destinies, her powerful sister determined on celebrating their marriage with a degree of splendour which should be the talk of the whole duchy.*

The Princess was invited to these nuptials, but the invitation was given in a way that was certain of being declined. Nevertheless, though she would not go herself, she insisted on Mademoiselle Knesebeck attending. This the confederates had not anticipated. The Princess's attendant, however, was received with much politeness, and she found that the most distinguished characters amongst

* The second husband of this woman was Major-general von Weyke. Her children were one son and one daughter. The latter, Frederica Charlotte, was married to Lieutenant-General von Wendt, by whom she had Amelia Sophia Mary-Ann, married to Adam Gottlieb von Wallmoden; but Madame Wallmoden is better known to the English reader as the Countess of Yarmouth, mistress of George II. The women of this family constituted a strumpetocracy, that for three generations monopolized the amorous attentions of the head of the house of Brunswick-Lüneburg.

the guests were the Crown Prince and Mademoiselle Schulenburg.

She saw as much of the entertainment as she wanted, and observed a great deal more of the conduct of the Prince and Mademoiselle Schulenburg than was sufficient to satisfy her that a degree of intimacy existed between them it was discreditable in any of the parties to encourage. She did not return to the palace till very late; nevertheless she found the Princess waiting her arrival, in extreme anxiety to learn the result of her observations. Mademoiselle Knesebeck softened her intelligence as much as she could; still there was sufficient in it to increase the jealous feelings the wily enemy of her mistress had created.

The Princess Sophia Dorothea could not refrain from manifesting to her husband the uneasiness he was exciting by his improper conduct; but the Prince, like all ignorant and vain men, grew sullen upon being told of his misdoings. He contrasted the gloom and dissatisfaction with which he was received on those now rare occasions, when he entered the apartments of his consort, with the pleasantry and adulation that greeted his frequent appearances in the gay mansion of the

Platens; and the latter was too much to his taste not to be preferred. The natural consequence was, that he still more openly neglected the Princess, and still more conspicuously paid attentions to Mademoiselle Schulenburg.

The dangerous woman who had already done so much mischief, had full knowledge of the manner in which the consort of the Crown Prince felt the neglect from which she was suffering, and took care, by sly insinuations and sarcastic allusions to the Princess in his hearing, to prejudice him still more strongly against her, and encourage him in the line of conduct he was pursuing, whilst to the Princess her manners became daily more annoying and insulting. To her sovereign she did not fail also to represent the conduct of his daughter-in-law in the most disadvantageous light, and did all she could to turn her and her mother into ridicule, as upstarts who had no legitimate right to the titles they possessed. But though his Serene Highness, by having his jealousy of the Duke of Wolfenbüttel, who was represented to him as being secretly favoured by the Duchess Eleonore, played upon, might still be brought to entertain opinions derogatory to the

"madame" of whom he had so long been in the habit of speaking slightingly, he entertained too high an opinion of the worth of her daughter to pay much attention to the inuendoes of his artful mistress.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE name of Königsmark is so closely connected with that of Sophia Dorothea, that it would be impossible to write a satisfactory history of one, without entering a good deal into detail when mentioning the other. The celebrity of the family also furnishes a more than ordinary claim on the reader's attention. Many of the name made themselves famous in the wars of Sweden, but we need go no further back than to John Christopher Königsmark, who was born in 1600. He held the commission of a field officer, in the military service of Gustavus Adolphus, by the time he was thirty years old, and had attained the rank of general in 1648, when he took Prague, and in the plunder, recovered the famous silver book, or Gospels of Bishop Ulphilas. He was rewarded

with the lucrative appointment of governor of the Duchies of Bremen and Verden, ceded to the King of Sweden by the Emperor of Austria,—was raised to the dignity of Count at the Coronation of Christina, in 1650, and died at Stockholm in 1663, leaving two sons:—the younger, Otho William, was born in 1639, and at an early age entered the French service, in which he rose to the dignity of Marshal; but he was forced to a change of masters on war breaking out between Sweden and France in 1672, and six years later, Charles XI. testified the high appreciation in which he was held, by making him Governor of Swedish Pomerania.

The elder brother, Conrad Christopher, also held a commission in the Swedish army, in which he rose to the rank of master of the artillery. He then entered the service of Holland, and having attained the rank of lieutenant-general, was killed at the siege of Bonne, in 1673. By his wife, Maria Christina Wrangel, he had two sons, Charles John, and Philip Christopher; and two daughters, Maria Aurora, and Amelia Wilhelmina; all of whom survived him. These details are rendered necessary by the mistakes into which nearly every author has fallen into, who has alluded

to either of these sons of Conrad Christopher Königsmark: some writing, as though but one Count of that name existed, and making the most singular blunders, by confusing the deeds of one brother with those of the other. Charles John, the eldest son, commenced his travels when quite a boy, accompanied by his uncle. He was in England in the year 1674, when it is probable he first heard of the young lady who was destined to be the cause of so much discredit to his name. This was the lady Elizabeth Percy, born 16th January, 1667; the infant daughter of Joscelin, eleventh earl of Northumberland, who dying at Turin in 1670, in his twenty-sixth year, leaving no other surviving issue, and his widow three years later, having united herself to Mr. Ralph Montagu, the English ambassador at the Court of France, Lady Elizabeth, as the heiress of the Percies, became the most splendid match in England, and on the marriage of her mother, was brought up at the magnificent family mansion, Petworth in Sussex, under the care of her grandmother, the widow of Algernon, Earl of Northumberland, who was expected to bequeath her young charge a considerable addition to her already enormous fortune.

The vast prospects of the young heiress became a subject of popular gossip long before she entered her teens, and many eager matchmakers were striving to secure so welcome a prize for their own families. The advantage of such a marriage may also have presented itself to the glowing imagination of young Königsmark, and this idea he may have cherished till his mind became inflamed with the golden visions it held out to him.

From England, Charles John Königsmark proceeded to France, where the reputation of his uncle, Count Otho William, his handsome face and figure, and brilliant accomplishments, secured him a splendid reception at Court. He soon became a favourite at Versailles, and established a reputation for gallantry at Paris, which was subsequently of considerable service to him. He was in Italy in 1677, and having made a visit to Malta, in the true spirit of adventure, which was then almost as prominent as in the Middle Ages, he volunteered to accompany the Knights in a cruise, and in an engagement with a Turkish vessel, he was the first to board the enemy—a forwardness, however which had nearly cost him dear, for he received a wound in the foot, and by some accident fell into

the sea. He greatly distinguished himself on this and other occasions, and having had enough of the Knights of Malta, he continued his travels, visiting Rome, Venice, and Genoa, thence proceeding through Portugal, he went to Spain, and was an honoured guest at the court of Madrid, at a period of much festivity, it being the marriage of King Charles II., with his first wife, Maria Louisa of Orleans. Among his exploits in the Spanish metropolis was one extremely characteristic of his fearless spirit. On the occasion of a grand bull-fight, at which all the rank and fashion of the kingdom were present, he made one of six knights — gorgeously caparisoned and mounted on the most valuable horses—who had volunteered to fight the most furious bull, from no other motive than the desire of pleasing some favourite lady. In his first encounter, the handsome young Swede was wounded in the leg, and his horse was gored in the most frightful manner. The lady for whom he encountered this danger, stood up and waved her handkerchief, and the people encouraged him with their plaudits. These signs of approval had such an effect upon him, that though almost on the point of fainting from pain and loss

of blood, he resolutely advanced with his sword, made one stroke at the infuriated animal, and was then carried by his attendants senseless out of the arena, in the conviction of every Spaniard present, the most gallant cavalier that had ever visited their capital.

He seems to have visited his family as soon as he had recovered from this adventure; and subsequently took his younger brother, Philip Christopher, whom we mentioned in a previous chapter as a very early acquaintance, and presumed lover of Sophia Dorothea, to England, for the purpose of there finishing his education. They sailed from Gothenburg in Sweden, and after a very stormy voyage landed at Hull, in the year 1681. Count Charles John presented himself at Windsor, bearing a letter of introduction from his own sovereign to Charles II., who, however, had no doubt heard of his young visitor before. He appears to have taken as great a liking to him as the King of France, and that this was not so evanescent as was customary with the likings of the merry monarch, we shall have occasion presently to show. The Count placed his brother at a celebrated academy in London, kept by M.

Faubert,* and though a M. Hanson was still retained as his governor, the elder Count made the most liberal arrangements that he should be prepared for Oxford.

The rank and fortune of the Königsmarks obtained them access to the most distinguished families in England; and whilst the younger brother was diligently pursuing his studies, the elder had opportunities of becoming further acquainted with the wealthy heiress, whose sterling attractions appear to have effaced the impression made on his heart by the dark-eyed Spaniard, for whom he had risked his life. But during his absence some changes had taken place, which rendered her ladyship still more the public talk. She had little more than passed her twelfth year when the intrigues of the various competitors for her hand were for a time put a stop to by her marriage, in 1679, with Henry Cavendish, Earl of Ogle, only son of Henry, second Duke of Newcastle. Unfortunately, the bridegroom died in the following year, leaving his interesting widow a greater prize than

* It is described as situated at the top of the Haymarket; the locality, no doubt, is indicated by a court in the neighbourhood that still bears the name of Foubert.

ever, and consequently more than ever the object of rival family intrigues and speculations.

It was in this state of things that the elder of the two Königsmarks entered the field, as a suitor for the youthful widow's hand. He had no difficulty in making himself personally known to her, and may have imagined that his reputation for gallantry, his fine figure, and captivating manners, would produce all the effect on her unsophisticated heart, that had already rewarded his attentions to more womanly beauties; but whether she afforded him encouragement, as has been assumed, or not, it is certain her family gave him none. Notwithstanding his brilliant reputation, and the favour in which he was held by so many kings, the Dowager Countess looked upon him as an adventurer, and very plainly gave him to understand she would not entertain his pretensions.

The Tangier expedition was at this time about to sail from England, and in no slight degree inflamed by his rejection, the Count sought an appointment to join it, but not obtaining the encouragement he anticipated, he went to Paris, where he received from the French King the command of the regiment of Furstenburg. This reward, however, was not suffi-

cient to restrain his desire to join in the war against the Moors. He hastened to Spain, and thence crossed to Tangier, where he arrived just in time to take part with the garrison in a sortie, in which he distinguished himself, at the head of a mere handful of volunteers like himself, in driving the Moors from the walls of the fortress, till they were forced to fling themselves into the sea. Pacific negociations, somewhat too soon for him, stopped the fighting, and the Moors being no longer enemies, the adventurer varied his entertainment by joining in a cruise against the Algerines. His exploits were, however, suddenly brought to a conclusion by news he received from England, which appears so much to have disturbed his ideas as to have excited him to undertake an adventure of a totally different character to those which had made the name of Königsmark so widely celebrated.

Though rejected by the family of Lady Ogle, the Count was far from giving up a pursuit which held out to him such brilliant advantages. But whilst he was attacking the Moors and the Algerines, her ladyship's friends were busily employed securing her a second husband, with no more

reference to the aspiring foreigner, than if such a person had never existed. This second bridegroom was found in the person of Thomas Thynn, from his wealth called "Tom of Ten Thousand," of Longleat, in Wiltshire, a member of Parliament, a man of somewhat debauched habits, and a frequent associate of the Duke of Monmouth, whose suffrages he had secured by presenting his grace with a set of Oldenburg coach-horses. The wedding took place in the summer of 1681. For such intelligence Count Königsmark was quite unprepared, and with all the recklessness and all the looseness of principle that characterize too many of the heroes of the seventeenth century, he resolved on getting rid of his more successful rival, who seems to have aggravated his offence by venturing upon some personalities reflecting on the Count. At the Court of Charles II., and in many other courts of Europe, the code of morals in use would have placed Count Königsmark's plan for gaining a wealthy heiress in a very different degree of criminality to that in which it would now be regarded; but however completely we must condemn such conduct as savage and revolting, we are bound to take into

consideration whatever may be even in the slightest degree excusatory in reference to it.

The Count arrived in London early in the year 1682, bringing in his suite a countryman, styled Captain Vraatz, who was devoted to him—a fellow of the most dauntless courage, who, believing his patron had been wronged by Mr. Thynn, was ready to undertake any desperate adventure in his behalf. The Count took private lodgings, remaining incognito, as he afterwards stated, on account of some cutaneous disorder he had contracted during his campaign in Morocco; he saw no one but his younger brother and his tutor, his doctor, Vraatz, and one or two attendants. The Captain strove to fasten a quarrel upon Mr. Thynn, that he might have an opportunity of avenging the affront he considered he had put upon his friend, by depriving him of a large fortune; but that gentleman did not appear inclined to give it him. He then procured the assistance of a Lieutenant John Stern, a needy scoundrel, and George Borodzycz, or Borosky, a Pole, who had come from Sweden with horses for the Count; to be ready, well-armed, to defend him, whilst he engaged Mr. Thynn, whom he had determined should fight

him, wherever he might be found. It is impossible to avoid the inference, that the Count was privy to these proceedings, but it has also been hinted that the young lady secretly encouraged him, and was as anxious as himself to be rid of her husband.* Arms were brought to his lodgings, and inquiries were made at his instigation, which certainly go far to prove he anticipated a catastrophe: but this may have been as a result to a regular hostile meeting between his rival and the captain. Vraatz's seconds were much too unscrupulous for going to work in an honourable manner, for having watched a long time, they were all on horseback when they met Mr. Thynn alone in his carriage, which the Duke of Monmouth had left scarcely a moment before. The vehicle was stopped by the Captain, and the Pole fired a musquetoon or blunderbuss into it, possibly prematurely, as he seems to have been a half-witted sort of fellow.†

Mr. Thynn was dangerously wounded, and the

* Swift, in some obscure lines, plainly intimates this in the famous "Windsor Prophecy."

† Captain Vraatz, before and after his condemnation, maintained that the Pole had mistaken his orders.

confederates rode away. As he shortly afterwards died, such a deed committed in the dusk of the evening, in so public a thoroughfare as Pall Mall, created a great sensation in the metropolis. Pursuit was soon made after the assassins by the powerful friends of the deceased, who possessed too much influence to allow of such a deed, even in those unsettled times, escaping the cognizance of justice. All the parties were apprehended. Count Königsmark, learning the excitement that prevailed on the subject, endeavoured to leave the country; but he was overtaken at Gravesend, and was imprisoned previously to being brought to the bar of the Old Bailey to take his trial as an accessory before the fact, with the principal criminals.

When it became known that a foreign nobleman of such distinction as Count Königsmark was in Newgate on a charge of being concerned in the murder of the wealthy Mr. Thynn, the public mind was quite in a ferment. The character of "Tom of Ten Thousand" was a very indifferent one. It was known that he had seduced a lady on a promise of marriage, before his nuptials with the youthful widow of Lord Ogle, whose

hand, by the way, he had secured in a manner far from creditable, as he had entered into a bond for five hundred pounds, which he had not paid, to one George Potter and his wife, to obtain the young lady by their assistance.* Nevertheless his kinsmen were extremely desirous of pursuing every one concerned in his assassination to the gallows. Count Königsmark, however, was not without powerful friends, though the tide of popular indignation ran very strong against him. Charles II. was unwilling so brave an officer should be lost to society by the interposition of the hangman, and the sovereign's wishes were seconded by many other persons high in authority.

The trial came on on the 28th of February 1682, and every effort was made to inflame the minds of the jury against the Count. Among the witnesses were Hanson, the tutor of the young Count, and his pupil. The former underwent a long and most severe examination, and he certainly strove, as much as man could, that his evi-

* They brought an action against his executors for its recovery; but, after a great deal of litigation and different judgments in several courts, they were denied their claim.

dence should throw as little discredit on the name of Königsmark as possible. Frequent reference was made to the Count's brother—that he was sick of an ague—that he had been on a visit to the Duke of Richmond, and that he was about leaving M. Foubert's academy to go to Oxford. The accused, as a recommendation to the jury, dwelt on his attachment to Protestant England, stating his family were Protestants, and that he had brought his brother to England, that he might the better be instructed in that religion, and educated in a proper knowledge of her free and enlightened institutions.

The young Count testified only to the fact advanced in the defence, that his brother had a design of purchasing horses in England, for which reason the Pole had been sent for.

"My lord," said he, "I had a bill of exchange."

"For how much money, my lord?" inquired the Lord Chief Justice Pemberton.

"For a thousand pistoles to buy horses; and he has bought one horse, and was to buy more?" *

* "Tryal and condemnation of George Borosky, alias Boratzi, Christopher Vraatz, and John Stern, for the barbarous murder

The Lord Chief Justice laid considerable stress on this; in fact, notwithstanding the strenuous exertions of the Duke of Monmouth, Sir Thomas Thynn, Lord Cavendish, and other friends of the deceased, his lordship evidently favoured Count Königsmark, the result of which was seen in the verdict, for the Count was acquitted, and the three confederates ordered for execution. Even after the verdict, every effort was made to render the name of Königsmark odious. The convicted murderers were visited in prison by learned divines, and a great deal of pains taken to induce them to confess.* The Pole and the lieutenant did make what is called a confession, but each is so tinged by superstition, and coloured by exaggeration, that very little credit can be placed in it. The captain was formed of different stuff, on whom the exhortations of Drs. Burnet and Horneck could make no impression.

of Thomas Thynn, Esq., in Pall Mall; together with the trial of Charles John Count Coningsmark, as accessory before the fact of the same murder," folio 1682.

* Dr. Burnet, the historian, and Dr. Horneck, minister of the German chapel in the Savoy, frequently visited the criminals, and published the result of their observations and conversations.

"Vraatz," says Evelyn, "told a friend of mine who accompanied him to the gallows, and gave him some advice, that he did not value dying a rush, *and hoped and believed God would deal with him like a gentleman*,"—an anecdote extremely characteristic of this desperado. To the last he denied that Count Königsmark had engaged him to put Mr. Thynn out of the way, and soundly rated his coadjutors for what he called their lying confessions. Christian burial was allowed the lieutenant. The Pole, however, did not profit by his statement, for he was hung in chains at Mile End; whilst the fearless captain, after his execution, lay in state in a rich coffin lined with lead. The body was then embalmed and transported to his own country.

Count Königsmark found himself obliged to give up all thoughts of the young lady, for whom he had so committed his reputation. Shortly after his acquittal he was in Paris, where he seems to have been as much caressed as ever.* It has

* Some of his biographers have been extremely indulgent to his memory. See Moreri, Grand Dictionnaire Historique, Amsterdam 1740, and the Grand Dictionnaire Universel Hollandais.

been stated that Lord Cavendish sent him a challenge, and they were to have met at Calais, but that the Count's conscience made him decline the meeting.* There exists, however, no evidence of any such challenge having been sent, and Count Königsmark was not the man to have refused meeting any one. In 1683 he returned to his estates, but as he could not endure inactivity, he was soon found sharing in the dangers of active warfare. He was wounded at the siege of Cambray in the same year. He subsequently accompanied his regiment to Spain, where he displayed his usual gallantry at the siege of Verona, and on several other occasions. He seems here to have sighed for a change, for in 1686 he is found accompanying his uncle, Count Otho William, to the Morea, then a great source of attraction to military adventurers. He distinguished himself at

* Granger and Pennant, in their notices of the Count, have fallen into many mistakes; Horace Walpole, in his Reminiscences of the Court of George II., and in his Memoirs of the last ten years of that sovereign's reign, commits the error of confounding Count Charles John with Count Philip Christopher Königsmark, and this has been repeated in almost every subsequent allusion to the name.

the sieges of Navarin and Modon, and at the battle of Argos, where he so exerted himself as to bring on an attack of pleurisy, of which he died in a few days. Count Otho William died about two years subsequently.

By the deaths of his elder brother and uncle, the young Count Königsmark inherited great wealth. He left England soon after the trial of his brother, and travelled with his tutor in France and other countries. With his own family, and that of Brunswick-Lüneburg, there had long existed a cordial intimacy; and, therefore, soon after he became his own master he presented himself at the Court of Hanover, received from its sovereign the appointment of colonel of the guards, and in the consort of the Crown Prince resumed his acquaintance with his juvenile friend at Zelle.

It should be remembered, that the young Count had become not only one of the handsomest men of his time, and was possessed of immense wealth that made the very costly style in which he lived the theme of general admiration; but that he was a remarkably intelligent man, apparently a finished gentleman, a graceful courtier,

and a brave and skilful officer. Perhaps the Princess Sophia Dorothea found pleasure in his society in recalling her childish days with all their innocent delights, possibly she was entertained with the result of the observations the Count had made during his travels, and it may be she found a more than ordinary satisfaction in listening to his witty remarks, for making which he was celebrated, on the persons by whom she was surrounded; but it is certain they appeared to enjoy a mutual gratification in each other's society, and rarely met in public without entering into long, and as it seemed to the spectators, interesting conversations.

The Count had already distinguished himself in a manner that had brought him no slight degree of fame wherever he had shown himself. His handsome person, graceful manners, and sparkling conversation, had combined to make him a great favourite with both sexes; but his principles were very unsettled, and his life was disgraced by a tendency to the licentiousness so common at this period.

In Hanover, if the connexion of the elder

Count in Mr. Thynn's murder gave his brother any uneasiness, it was not very visible. Notwithstanding the discredit that, it might be supposed, was attached to his name, he was no less witty in conversation among the gayest spirits of the gay circle in which he moved, and with the ladies was not the less readily recognised as the handsomest and most accomplished gentleman who had come within their cognizance. It should, however, be borne in mind, that several years had elapsed since this guilty transaction had occurred.

The Princess knew him only as a young nobleman possessed of singular powers of pleasing, who had been intimate with her in her childhood; but even had news of the murder of Mr. Thynn reached her, and had any misunderstanding existed as to which of the two was the criminal Count Königsmark, it was no difficult matter for the young Count to have convinced her of *his* entire innocence. Let this have been as it may, it is certain that their intercourse was quite on the footing of old acquaintances. But such familiarity could not long exist without attracting the attention of the busy wife of the

prime minister. She thought something might be made of it. She determined something should be made of it.

It came to her knowledge that one morning the Count had met the Princess on the staircase returning to her apartments from an airing. She had just taken the young Prince into her arms, intending carrying him up stairs, but the Count, on observing this, insisted that the child was too heavy for the young mother, and gallantly persisted in taking the infant from her, notwithstanding her good-humoured attempts to retain him, and then preceded her, carrying him up stairs. With this incident the favourite proceeded at once to the Bishop, and after a due assortment of inuendoes and suspicions, she related the incident just described, but with such a colouring of her own as made it pregnant with suspicion.

To her extreme surprise, the Bishop would scarcely listen to it. He was too well satisfied of the excellence and purity of his daughter-in-law, to allow a doubt of her to be introduced into his mind by a source so discreditable as his own mistress, of whose evil life he was not altogether unaware, though partly from the influence of old

associations, and partly from a fear she might do him much mischief were she provoked, he permitted her to take that active interest in his affairs she had so long assumed. He laughed at the incident as a pardonable piece of gallantry allowable to so old a friend as Count Königsmark, and, directing his informant's attention to something else, dismissed the subject.

Indignant, but not disconcerted, the wily *intriguante* had recourse to other tactics. She pretended to take a vast deal of interest in the Count's welfare—sought his society, flattered him, and both by word and look expressed for him an extraordinary degree of admiration. The Count was too finished a courtier, and too courtly a gallant, to receive such attentions from a beautiful woman without due acknowledgments. He returned her civilities, and seemed to entertain a proper appreciation of the notice she conferred upon him. Her next step was to appear cognizant of his intercourse with the consort of the Crown Prince, and prove to him she could afford him facilities for carrying it on.

There chanced to be a masquerade at the

palace, in which the Count greatly distinguished himself by the talented manner in which he assumed different characters. The court circle were warm in their admiration of this successful piece of acting, and no one was more so than the lady of the Baron von Platen, who set no bounds to her eulogy. She seemed never so contented as when she could secure an interview with him, and skilfully directed the conversation in such a manner as almost to force him to pay her compliments. She appeared very desirous of conducting the Count to the apartments of the Princess, which he at first declined, on the score of having a prior engagement; but having prevailed on him to walk with her, she led him to the palace, and requested him to wait for her in an anteroom. Whilst there he received a message from the Princess to go to her apartments and pay his respects.

The Count was a man of the world, and was fully aware of the character of his new friend, therefore he was by no means pleased by this attempt of her's to become a coadjutor in his intimacy with the Princess. She made several

efforts subsequently to repeat this manœuvre, but Königsmark was on his guard, and dexterously avoided them. Nevertheless, a short time afterwards, they were walking together in the gardens of the palace, when she induced him to enter a pavilion, on the pretence that she wanted to adjust a part of her head-dress that had got out of order. Whilst there they discovered two gentlemen approaching, and the lady induced the Count to make a hasty retreat with her, but not before they had been noticed, though not recognised, by the persons approaching the pavilion. Madame Platen, however, before she left, unobserved by her companion, dropped an embroidered glove.

They had scarcely departed when the Crown Prince and Baron von Platen entered the pavilion, much astonished at the sudden disappearance of its late inmates. Platen discovered the glove, and presented it to the Prince, who readily recognised it as one he had given to the Princess. The Crown Prince wished to know who the companion of the lady was, and a turn in the path bringing the fugitives again into view, he was perfectly

satisfied he beheld Count Königsmark. The lady too, he did not fail to observe, was in a dress very similar to such as was usually worn by the Princess.

At this crisis, they were interrupted by servants, who declared they had been sent by the Princess to look for a glove she had lost. The Prince thinking the affair rather singular, led the Baron to the presence of his consort, who declared that one of her embroidered gloves had been stolen from her, and a substitute put in its place. The Baron produced the original, and the Princess immediately claimed it. The Prince thought it very strange: but it was carefully concealed from his Highness that his younger brother, Prince Maximilian, had, at the instigation of Madame Weyke, taken the glove to her, to gratify her wish to examine the embroidery. It then immediately passed into the hands of her sister, who made the infamous use of it we have described. There was a large amount of stupidity in the composition of the Crown Prince; but after having asked two or three questions, which threw no light on the matter, he walked away not a little dissatisfied.

This was one of those unprincipled schemes by which the wife of the prime minister sought to blast the reputation of the innocent daughter-in-law of her sovereign. It betrays the fiendish malice of the wretch who employed it, and was the first intimation she gave that nothing less than the utter ruin of the Princess would satisfy her craving for revenge.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE critical state of affairs in England had awakened the liveliest attention in the mind of the politic sovereign of Hanover, and he was busily engaged in preparing to take advantage of any event that might favour the pretensions of his son. His consort took an interest in the subject at least equal to his own. Indeed she regarded it with a degree of attention that appeared to increase with every year of her life.

This lady was always desirous of keeping up a good understanding with her royal relatives in England. The following inedited letter—now first printed from the original preserved amongst the Lambeth MSS.—congratulating Charles II. on his restoration to the throne of his ancestors, is an early and interesting specimen of her correspondence :—

" SIRE,—

" Parmy tant d'aplaudissements et de joye pour l'heureux retablissement de votre Majesté, il me seroit dificile de cacher la mienne, quand même j'ignorerais la bonté de votre Majesté, que je m'assure ne condannera la hardiesse que je prans de la luy oser tesmoigner, come aussi la satisfaction avec laquelle j'ay apris que mes veus ont enfin esté exoosés, celon la justice de leur cause. Il ne me reste plus rien à desirer pour le present avec que plus d'ardeur et de zelle que l'affermissement du trône de votre Majesté pour tous les ciecles a venir, accompagnes de toute les grandeurs et contantemens deu à sa royale personne. Et quand mesme je n'en verrois l'esclat que de loing, de pouvoir neantmoins passer dans l'esprit de votre Majesté pour une personne qui sera toute sa vie avec beaucoup de respect,

" Sire, de votre Majesté,

" La très humbles et très

" Obeissante servante,

" SOPHIE.

" A. Hanover ce 31 de May, 1660."

The Crown Prince was also actively employed

in assisting his father's views. He had seen more than one campaign since his marriage, in which he had favourably distinguished himself. He accepted from the Emperor a command in the army sent to oppose the Turks, and was present at their severe chastisement on the 12th of September, 1683. He subsequently gained additional laurels by his conduct at the capture of Buda, in 1686.

But although the Emperor was a superior, whose service it was greatly to his interest to adopt, there was one to whom he felt bound by still stronger ties. This was the Prince of Orange, who had already afforded him his countenance, and recognised his claims to the British throne. This Prince, as the husband of the Princess Mary, had ably intrigued with the powerful Protestants of England to force from the throne the unpopular sovereign James the Second, his father-in-law, and secure the vacant seat. The Crown Prince of Hanover gladly served under the command of the Prince of Orange in Holland, where he beheld a good deal of active service. He joined in the battles of Steenkerk and Lauden, and was present at the siege of Namur; by his conduct in the field, and

his attentions to his commander, he won the favourable consideration of that very shrewd Prince.

Whilst engaged in these campaigns Prince George was rarely seen at Hanover, and still more rarely beheld by his neglected wife, his indifference to whom began now to be so publicly talked of, that his father thought of remonstrating. From this, however, he appears to have been diverted by the representations of his confidential counsellors the Platens, who assured him such conduct was entirely the fault of the Princess in making herself, by her severe manners and unamiable disposition, so extremely disagreeable to her consort. The Bishop was still favourably disposed towards his daughter-in-law; but as constant dropping wears away stone, constant calumny as surely wears away the best convictions, and his kindly disposition towards Sophia Dorothea seemed giving way to the incessant attacks that had been made upon it. He went to his Duchess for advice, but she was too deeply engaged in philosophical speculations to give much of her attention to a point she thought of so little moment. She was of course, prejudiced in favour of her son, and speedily dismissed the matter, by giving it as her

opinion, that the Princess should increase her efforts to regain the affections of her lord.

The situation of the consort of the Crown Prince was one very trying to the temper. The most angelic disposition must have suffered from such constant annoyance and insult as she was forced to endure. The behaviour of the Platens was of itself sufficiently provoking, but to this was added the conduct equally offensive from Madame Weyke, Mademoiselle Schulenburg, and others of the infamous coterie, who ruled either the sovereign or his heir. At all the court entertainments or receptions they flaunted about, in the presence of the Princess, as insolently as though her Highness was there only by their sufferance. This, however, sometimes provoked remarks from her that made them a little more inclined to keep their distance.

The Princess was far from being happy, and she wrote to her mother complaining bitterly of the treatment she received, hoping that her father's remonstrances would bring about a more satisfactory state of things. But affairs had much changed at Zelle since her departure. Bernstorf had been so well rewarded for his co-operation in

uniting the two families, that he felt bound hand and foot to the service of the sovereign of Hanover. He continued to remain where he was, but it was rather to watch over the interests of his new master, than from any desire to be of advantage to the old one. Nevertheless, the influence of his prime minister over the Duke of Zelle had increased to such an extent, that the opinions of his once beloved counsellor were never thought of, and the Duchess, though she made efforts to render Bernstorf more inclined to pay a proper attention to her wishes, had the mortification of finding that in everything she was thwarted and opposed. If she attempted to recommend any line of policy that might be advantageous to her friend the Duke of Wolfenbüttel, one as nearly the reverse as possible was sure to be followed. On this point Bernstorf had received the most decisive instructions; and in grateful acknowledgment of the valuable addition to his estate he had lately obtained, he was particularly active in defeating any plan, as soon as brought forward, that could in any way favour Duke Anthony Ulrich.

There was another direction in which it was expected he would greatly further the views of the sovereign of Hanover, or, more properly

speaking, of that sovereign's mistress; and this was to create such a prejudice in the mind of the Duke of Zelle against his daughter, that nothing she could advance would have any weight with him. With this object in view, the most discreditable stories were told him of her stubbornness, obstinacy, and pride, till he was almost inclined to doubt so wilful a creature could be the daughter of his once idolized Eleonore. But through the skilful management of their inventor, the lady of the Baron von Platen, these stories came before the Duke so well authenticated, it was impossible to doubt such testimony. So that when the indignant mother attempted to acquaint him with her daughter's wrongs, she found him inclined to lay the blame entirely on the Princess, and not at all disposed to interfere.

In these intrigues the Baron and his lady had been so successful, that their grateful sovereign, as a reward, raised them both to a higher dignity. They became Count and Countess. With this new distinction the Platens assumed greater state than ever, and so absolute had they become, that he must be daring indeed who sought to put an affront upon them. A singular instance of the

influence possessed by the Countess Platen, and of her readiness in punishing what she considered an offence to her, was displayed in the person of Prince Maximilian, a younger brother of the Crown Prince.

. The Countess possessed a remarkably brilliant complexion, which it was supposed, and not unjustly, she owed to the use of cosmetics. The Prince, in the true spirit of youthful mischief, resolved to make an experiment to ascertain if the general suspicion was correct, and when they were together he playfully sprinkled a few drops of what appeared to be water, over her face. The lady was so inquisitive to know the nature of this liquid, that the Prince, as if accidentally, upset the glass in which it was contained. She expressed her regret at the accident, and appeared inclined to think no more about it, but as soon as the back of the Prince was turned, she set on foot such inquiries as led to her discovering that it was the warm water in which peas had been boiled—a popular test for the presence of rouge. Shortly afterwards Prince Maximilian was summoned to the presence of his father, from whom he received a stern reprimand, and a threat of

being placed under arrest, should he ever again try such experiments upon the Countess Platen.

The Countess was polite to servility to all who were greatly her superiors, but to those whom she considered beneath her, she was intolerably arrogant, proud, and over-bearing. She was, besides, very revengeful, cruel, and insincere, and left no art untried to injure those who had once offended her. Her malice had been excited against the young Prince; she resolved to let it take its effect on the first opportunity that presented itself; and she had received information that assured her an occasion would soon occur.

Prince Maximilian had become very greatly dissatisfied with an arrangement by which his father and uncle had set aside the will of his grandfather, which allowed the sons certain claims on the estates of the family. The agreement entered into at the marriage of the Princess Sophia Dorothea merged all such rights into the grasping right of primogeniture, by which the younger branches were deprived of their claims. The Prince did not approve of being robbed for the benefit of his elder brother, and he took into his confidence Count Mölcke, the master of the

hunt, and subsequently sought another adviser equally shrewd, but much more dangerous—the traitorous prime minister of the sovereign of Zelle. He also thought of asking the assistance of the Duke of Wolfenbüttel, whose claims were also affected by this family marriage, and imprudently entered into negociations with him, of which Bernstorf was cognizant.

We have already spoken of the extreme jealousy with which Bishop Ernest Augustus regarded any reference to, or intimacy with, his kinsman Duke Anthony Ulrich; with the same feelings he looked upon any interference with his long-cherished project of uniting the governments of Zelle and Hanover: consequently the offence of his son Prince Maximilian was doubly flagrant. The treacherous Bernstorf knew this, but serious as might be the consequences to the youth, instead of warning him of his danger, he afforded him every encouragement to proceed, whilst acquainting the Platens with all he could learn of his plans. He knew such intelligence would be well paid for, but was scarcely aware of the great gratification it would afford to his friend the Countess. The information once in her hands, the young

man was doomed to learn the risk he had incurred by experimenting on the complexion of his father's mistress.

In the mean while, the Countess Platen had employed all her blandishments upon the handsome Königsmark, with the object, it was thought, of making him subservient to her views against the Princess, and he became so frequent a visitor at her house that she was obliged to endeavour to stop the scandal it occasioned, by stating he was paying his addresses to her daughter. How far the Count's conduct to her laid him open to the stories that were in circulation about them, cannot be correctly ascertained, but the general laxity of morals, and Königsmark's well known character for intrigue, render it very probable that he either did not care or did not dare to neglect her advances. Nevertheless, he still devoted himself to the Princess. No doubt, communion with her pure and noble character was too refreshing to be readily abandoned, after being obliged to associate with the clique of the wife of the prime minister.

The Countess, however, could not endure that Königsmark should visit the Princess; she remon-

strated with him, and even requested he would leave off doing so. The Count, in his next interview, repeated this in a jesting manner to the Princess, but the latter having learned the malicious remarks her powerful enemy had made on the subject, considered it advisable to avoid giving cause for scandal, and recommended the Count to discontinue visiting her. To recompense him for any disappointment this might bring, she gave her consent to a correspondence that was to pass through the hands of her attached friend, Mademoiselle Knesebeck.

Notwithstanding this caution, the Countess was too shrewd, or else too suspicious, to rest satisfied, and, as whenever the consort of the Crown Prince met her in public, her Highness did not care to conceal the contempt she felt for such an adventuress, and Königsmark could not refrain, on similar occasions, from showing the respect with which he regarded the Princess, the Countess continued to receive provocation to revenge, which she was not the person to pass unnoticed. She advised Ernest Augustus to have the conduct of his daughter-in-law closely watched, and gave many reasons that seemed founded on incon-

trovertible evidence, that it was absolutely necessary for the preservation of the honour of his family. Mademoiselle Schulenburg was induced to give similar advice, founded on the same testimony, to the Crown Prince. Both were, however, greatly disappointed in finding their interposition for the preservation of the honour of the Brunswick-Lüneburg family, produce as little attention as might have resulted from a recommendation, to be careful against robbery, from known pick-pockets. Thus passed three or four years, each becoming to the Princess more fruitful of unhappiness than its predecessor.

An event occurred about this time which greatly astonished the more simple-minded of the people of Hanover. The story which was circulated by authority was, that Count Mölcke, the grand master of the hunt, during a court entertainment, presented his snuff-box to his sovereign. His Serene Highness immediately took a large pinch, and, rising from his seat at the card-table, requested the Count to take his hand. He then proceeded, with the snuff between his fingers and thumb, to another apartment, and, singular to relate, there gave it to a favourite pet spaniel. What is more strange, the poor dog found his

master had presented him with a gift that "was not to be sneezed at," and immediately died. Directly this awful event had occurred, Count Mölcke was told that some one was waiting to speak to him, and when he arrived at the bottom of the staircase he found himself placed under arrest.

There can be but little doubt that of this very stale trick the grand master of the hunt knew nothing; and we cannot give his accusers much credit for cleverness in having recourse to anything so out of date for ruining a nobleman, as an accusation of attempting to poison his sovereign. Count Mölcke, however, was thrown into prison, and was examined as to his participation in a conspiracy for separating the Lüneburg and Calenburg territories. He did not deny what was advanced against him, but in entering into a detail of his share in the business, he proved that he had been instigated to it by Bernstorf. Nevertheless that traitor having given the information, his assurances that the Count had endeavoured to draw him into the conspiracy, were quite satisfactory to the judges, and Count Mölcke was not believed.

This transaction greatly excited Ernest Augustus, and the Countess Platen imagined that he

was in a mood so implacable she could easily implicate the consort of the Crown Prince in the same hateful treason. Accordingly, before the trial was concluded, one of her numerous agents privately questioned the prisoner whether he knew how far the Princess Sophia Dorothea participated in the conspiracy to separate the two territories; and on his asserting total ignorance of her being in any way concerned in it, it was hinted to him that his trial should end favourably for him if he could implicate the Princess. The Count was too much a man of honour to save his life by conduct so abominable. He repeatedly answered he did not believe the Princess had the slightest notion of his design.

Finding he was not to be tampered with, he was brought to trial, condemned to death, and suffered decapitation on the 15th of July, 1692, in the riding place behind the Royal Mews in Hanover. Prince Maximilian was banished, and sought refuge at the court of his kinsman, the Duke of Wolfenbüttel.

His father, towards the conclusion of the same year, found consolation for the trouble and annoyance he had been put to by his son, in a new

dignity, for which he had long been sighing, with all the ardour of a lover for a favour from his mistress. The assistance he had rendered the Emperor of Austria was gratefully acknowledged by that monarch. A treaty of everlasting friendship between the two sovereigns was signed on the 22nd of March of this year, and on the 11th of the following December the Emperor transmitted, through the hand of Counsellor von Grote, a promise under his own hand, that the Duchy of Hanover should be raised to an Electorate. This news was so gratifying to the ambitious sovereign of Hanover, that he caused a succession of fêtes to be celebrated in honour of so important an acquisition, and, in consequence, his good courtiers and subjects took to feasting and merry-making with as much zeal as good courtiers and subjects should always exhibit on occasions of compliment to their royal master.

Amongst those who distinguished themselves in giving entertainments to congratulate the new Elector, the Countess Platen was the most conspicuous. Even the court fêtes were thrown into the shade by the superior magnificence and luxury she displayed, She deemed herself bound to re-

joice on as imposing a scale as possible, as she took to herself the credit of procuring her lord this covetable distinction, and as he was not unmindful of her valuable services, she had the means of so rejoicing at her disposal. Indeed his obligations to her in procuring the much-desired Electoral dignity raised her influence over him even higher than it had been hitherto, and a person less sanguine than herself might have been satified she had now the power of crushing her fair and innocent rival, as easily as she had disposed of Prince Maximilian and his coadjutor Count Mölcke.

As regards that much-suffering Princess, things seemed to be drawing to a crisis very fast. Openly neglected by her husband,—scarcely noticed by her ambitious sovereign and his philosophic consort, and insulted by the impudent wantons who ruled both father and son, her life was a daily series of the most irritating humiliations,—the only relief from which she found in the society of her children, and in the sympathy of her faithful friend, Mademoiselle Knesebeck. She had endured with exemplary patience the gross injustice under which she laboured, in the conduct pursued to-

wards her by her husband's family, and through their toleration, by the licentious crew who made so prominent a feature at their court, but she sighed for the sweet peace she had so long enjoyed in the honoured home of her excellent mother, and often found herself entertaining a wish to leave the den of satyrs in which she had been so miserably misplaced, and with her children, seek an asylum at Zelle. This wish embraced the form of a resolution sooner than she expected.

Count Königsmark having, from the office he held of Colonel of the Guards, learned the attempt that had been put in practice to induce Count Mölcke to save his life by accusing the daughter-in-law of his sovereign, made the Princess acquainted with it, and she soon afterwards sought her consort, and disclosed to him the reckless conduct of the Countess Platen in making so infamous an effort to ruin her. The Crown Prince impatiently listened to her statement, and coldly replied,—it was a matter in which he had no concern, and did not want to be mixed up with. A husband declaring he had no concern in a cold-blooded attempt to destroy his wife,

was too much for the much-abused patience of the Princess, and a rather stormy discussion ensued, which, however, served no other purpose than to increase in the mind of the Crown Prince, that ill-feeling towards his consort, which had been so artfully infused into it by his mistresses.

Another humiliation was in store for her. The behaviour of herself and Count Königsmark in public to the Countess Platen and Mademoiselle Schulenburg, had been made a subject of complaint by them to the Elector and to his eldest son; the Colonel of the Guards was reprimanded by both princes, and the Princess received the admonitions of her husband. Smarting under these insults, she was one day promenading with Mademoiselle Knesebeck, when in a mysterious way she received from a poor old woman whom she had relieved, the information that Mademoiselle Schulenburg had just given birth to a daughter, of which the Crown Prince was the father.* This set the cup of bitterness overflowing. She became excessively excited,

* Mademoiselle Schulenburg gave birth to more than one—but her sister so ably helped her in keeping such evidences of her guilt out of sight, that she was never suspected of having been a mother by those not in the secret.

and questioned Mademoiselle Knesebeck very closely on the subject of the Prince's intrigues with that woman, till she forced from her all she knew,—which was, in fact, no more than every one knew, except the wronged and insulted wife.

As soon as the Princess returned to the palace, she rushed to the apartments of the Crown Prince, and finding him alone, upbraided him for his infamous conduct. He retorted in a style that could only have come from a vulgar profligate lost to every sense of honour and decency. This excited the indignation of the Princess to such an extent, she expressed her ideas of her husband in language that stung him to the quick,—and stung him the more because he knew he richly deserved it. As he had stooped to be a profligate, he had not much lower to degrade himself in becoming a brute; and the persons in the ante-room were presently alarmed by hearing screams and cries for assistance, and rushed in just in time to save their mistress from strangulation.

The Princess, in a state of insensibility, was carried by the attendants to her apartments, where by the skilful treatment and soothing at-

tentions of Mademoiselle Knesebeck, she in a short time recovered. She had had enough of her worthless husband, and having previously obtained permission from the Elector to visit her parents, she lost no time in setting off for Zelle. It was her intention never to return. Forbearance had proceeded to its limits. It was bad enough to see the affections of her husband diverted from her, and bestowed upon a tribe of impudent hussies who gloried in possessing the power to insult and annoy her; but when remonstrating against the grossest wrong a wife could receive, to be sprung at like a wild beast, and only escape strangling by the timely arrival of assistance, was more than human nature could endure. She could but pity the dupe of the designing wretches who had succeeded in inflaming his mind against her, but the brute who added personal violence to the wrong he had inflicted, she could only regard with contempt.

Instead of being ashamed of his dastardly conduct, henceforth he nourished the most implacable animosity against his outraged consort. The affair had irritated him against her to such an extent, that he would gladly have had her

severely punished, had a law been available for troublesome wives who take offence at their husband's infidelities. He seemed to regard her reproaches as a monstrous interference in his private affairs, he was not to put up with, and attributed them entirely to a dissatisfied and jealous disposition. In his eyes it mattered not with what indignity the mother of his children was treated. Her birth was equal to his, her moral and intellectual qualifications were very far superior, but he was not likely to think of these claims on his respect, when he forgot the more powerful ones she possessed as a wife and a mother. He appeared to think it very proper that a Crown Prince should not only treat his consort with the most insulting indifference, but carry on an illicit intercourse with one or more women of loose character almost in her society, and force her to humiliate herself by recognising their presence. He had no sense of justice, of morality, or even of decency, and whatever may have been his behaviour in the field, it is but too evident that he was insensible to the manliness that generates true courage.

The Elector was allowed to hear only an exaggerated account of the fracas between his

eldest son and his consort, in which the latter was made to appear a perfect fury, excited by a blind and unaccountable jealousy to wreak a summary vengeance on the person of the Crown Prince. He was extremely shocked, but felt satisfied that a short sojourn with her parents would make a salutary change in her disposition, and she would be less violent in her temper. As for the Electress, she could not understand how wives could become dissatisfied with their husbands. In her own person certainly she proved that no amount of matrimonial infidelity on the part of a husband would ever trouble her, and that associating with mistresses was not offensive in her ideas of good taste. She would not tolerate her daughter-in-law quarrelling with her husband on what she was pleased to consider so trifling a matter, and was ready enough to take the opinion of her informants that it arose entirely from obstinacy and bad temper.

The Countess Platen was delighted with this quarrel, and took care that the Prince should be encouraged in the "spirited" part he had thought proper to play; but there was to her an object of much greater solicitude, and this was to prevent the

outraged wife finding the happy home she had so ardently sought in her father's residence. The Countess had written to Bernstorf to prepare the mind of Duke George William for the approaching visit of his daughter. In consequence of which his confidential minister gave him an exaggerated account of the disagreements between the Crown Prince and his daughter. Self-will, jealousy, pride, and discontent, were insisted on as the sole causes of the unsatisfactory state in which the Crown Prince had lived with his consort: moreover, it was intimated to him that to countenance his daughter in her opposition to her husband would be sure to cause a breach in the good understanding that existed between the families. This argument had great force with him. He was willing to make any sacrifice rather than quarrel with the Elector, and the unfavourable impression made on his mind relating to his daughter rendered the matter one of very little difficulty.

The unhappy Princess, when she had arrived at what she had so long looked to as her haven of refuge, was soothed by the ready sympathy of her mother, who felt all the indignation of a truly

virtuous woman at the recital of the insults and brutality that had driven her daughter from her husband's roof. She was not at all astonished at her resolution not to return there, and willingly agreed to use her best exertions to gain the Duke of Zelle's permission for her to remain for the rest of her life within his territories. The Princess grew somewhat pacified by the affectionate assurances of her amiable parent, and for some time lost all sense of her wrongs in anticipating the sweet and tranquil pleasure that was in store for her, in the retirement she had selected from her unpleasant position at the profligate Court of Hanover. There, with her beloved children, her faithful Knesebeck, and her affectionate parents, what a blessed contrast would she find to the tainted atmosphere she had been obliged to breathe! It had been long since anything like happiness had visited her troubled heart, but in the visions of prospective bliss in which she now indulged, where she might be sure chartered profligacy would never be allowed to flaunt before her eyes, she began to experience a sense of enjoyment that very closely resembled it.

Alas! all these fair visions were at once dashed on one side in her first appeal to her father to sanction her staying where she was. To her extreme astonishment he decidedly refused to allow her to remain within his territories longer than would be considered sufficient for the visit of a daughter to her parents, and he made this refusal the more bitter by adding to it some severe remarks on her conduct towards her husband. He laid the blame of her marriage discomfort to her want of knowing how to govern her temper,—a deficiency he thought the more inexcusable, as in the person of the Electress she had always before her a bright example of a good wife. He then recommended—or to call things by their right names—insisted that the Princess should return to her husband with as little delay as possible.

This disappointment was a stunning blow to the ill-treated wife. She could scarcely believe in the existence of such inhumanity in a parent to his only child, as would induce him to refuse her an asylum from the brutal attacks and the offensive infidelities of her husband. She argued, she urged, she implored—but the same feeling, or rather the same want of feeling, that had caused her to be so

hastily torn from a young Prince who would have secured her happiness, to be given to another, of all her acquaintance the most certain to mar it, now interposed to tell her that from the intolerable misery this alliance had brought her, there should be no escape.

The Princess saw there was no hope for her, and as soon as she had sufficiently recovered from the overwhelming nature of her disappointment, —allowing herself only to take an agonizing farewell of her mother, whose affectionate heart was sorely troubled by the sight of her daughter's despair,—she stepped into her travelling carriage directly it could be got ready, and turned her back upon the home that in many a day of gloom and sorrow had shone like a pharos over the darkness, and seemed to point out a sure refuge and a peaceful security. Her hopes had proved as delusive as the mirage of the desert. With what bitterness of heart her return journey was accomplished, it is impossible to express.

It was known to her enemies that the Princess had fled to Zelle, and her object in doing so could scarcely have escaped them. She too well knew they would not long remain in ignorance of the

reason of her return. The insults she had experienced would be trifling in comparison with the insolence of triumphant malice she should now be forced to endure. Bitter, indeed, were her reflections as she thought of the impudent wantons with whom she should be again obliged to associate,—but even this was nothing contrasted with the feelings with which she regarded her father's cruel abandonment of her, and utter indifference to all the insults and wrongs his only child had received.

She had been advised to prove, by hastening her return, that she was anxious for a reconciliation with her husband. The question of her remaining at Zelle had been referred to the traitor Bernstorf, who had of course unanswerable objections to it, and he had thrown out the most confident assurances, that were the unhappy wife to be the first to desire a renewal of intercourse, it would produce the happiest effect. The Princess was far from being sanguine of such a result, but she had no alternative. She was too well aware of the compound of selfishness, obstinacy, and stupidity she possessed in the person of her husband, to anticipate from him any generous

impulses. But there was one motive that more than anything else satisfied her she must go back to her home, comfortless as she had found it. It was intimated to her that on no account would she be allowed to retain her children, were she to persist in refusing to return to her husband. That was a penalty she was not yet prepared to pay for the enjoyment of a life of peace and comfort, out of the depraved circle in which it had been her evil fortune to be cast.

When the Elector was told that no doubt existed of the intention of his daughter-in-law to live apart from her husband, which was evident from her journey to Zelle, after the assault upon her by the Crown Prince, he appeared seriously concerned. He did not know how far such a determination might affect his long-desired union of his own and his brother's territories. He had begun to remonstrate with his unruly son upon the indecorousness of his neglect of his wife, and to advise instant measures to be enforced for persuading his unhappy consort back to the family roof; when he received the intelligence that the Princess, having been discouraged by her father in her wish to remain at Zelle, was now on her

way back to Hanover. This took a great weight off his mind. Nevertheless, he did not neglect recommending to his son a more creditable line of conduct than he had hitherto thought it necessary to adopt,—which recommendation he extended to the whole circle, among whom he had little doubt, it was equally required. They readily promised to be on their best behaviour, and together anticipated the arrival of their victim.

The Herrnhausen, or summer palace, in which they waited for the Princess, was situated on the road from Bruckhausen, (whence the Princess was travelling,) a short distance from Hanover. Here they remained, apparently anxious, by their attentions, to remove from the unhappy wife, whose home they had rendered intolerable, all the unpleasant impressions they had created, yet no doubt, in their hearts, secretly determining to enjoy the spectacle of the humbled consort of the Crown Prince, obliged to come back to that domestic discomfort, from which she had endeavoured to escape.

The carriage of the Princess was declared to be approaching, and the worthless band of conspirators against the young matron, were on the

tiptoe of expectation. They schooled their hypocrisy to put on its most amiable disguise, their hearts all the while revelling in the prospect of the royal fugitive's embarrassment. The carriage was heard near the gates, and some of the most impudent rushed to the windows to observe the appearance of the Princess, after her discomfiture. To their extreme astonishment, the equipage passed on at a quick pace to Hanover; but their astonishment was much exceeded by their indignation. They proclaimed this conduct of the Princess to be a studied insult; they declared that it was a new proof of that proud and unconciliatory behaviour, that had made her society so extremely disagreeable. They argued for some signal punishment, to make her understand her position better.

Probably, the Princess did not know the royal family were at the Herrnhausen palace, and proceeded direct to Hanover. It has, however, been stated, that her highness was well aware of it, and was about entering the gates, when she observed her deadly enemy, the Countess Platen, at the window, watching for her approach: her appearance there, at such a moment, was over-

powering. Sophia Dorothea had endured too much, to meet the creator of all her miseries as unconcernedly as she desired, and therefore hastily gave orders to drive on to Hanover.

When embracing her children, and replying to the affectionate inquiries of Mademoiselle Knesebeck, little did she imagine the stir she had created by passing the Herrnhausen palace.

CONTENTS OF CHAPTER VIII.

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CHAPTER VIII.

WITHIN the last few years, great events had occurred in England, which much improved the pretensions of the Electress Sophia to the throne of that country. James the Second, having by his attempt to subvert the Protestant religion, and restore the Catholic to its ancient supremacy, created wide spread disaffection, the sagacious Prince of Orange, entered into communication with some of the most influential of the alarmed Protestants, and taking advantage of a favourable opportunity, landed in England, with a hostile armament, which was so speedily increased, by all ranks of the people, anxious to throw off the yoke of their head-strong and short-sighted ruler, that the latter found it necessary to consult his own safety by a precipitate flight from the kingdom.

His daughter and son-in-law were then elected by the nation, to fill the vacant throne, and under the title of William the Third, the Prince of Orange found himself possessed of those honours, for which he had so long, yet so secretly, been aspiring. He did not forget his kindred in Germany. The claims of the Electress Sophia, as next in succession to the Princess Anne, he was well inclined to recognise and support; and he honoured the Duke of Zelle with the Order of the Garter. There appears to be some reason for believing, that the Electress was not quite satisfied with the unceremonious manner in which James the Second had been cashiered by his subjects; she affected to be a Jacobite, and maintained communications with the exiled monarch: but probably this was one of the numerous eccentricities in which that illustrious lady was wont to show how far she could depart from the straightforward path of common-sense.

A lively sketch of her has been preserved by Lord Dartmouth, then employed on a diplomatic visit to the Electorate. He says, "She sent a coach to bring me to dinner to Herrnhausen, every day as I stayed. She was very free in her

discourse, and said she held a constant correspondence with King James and his daughter our Queen. With many particulars of a very extraordinary nature, that were great proofs of his being a very weak man, and her being a very good woman. She seemed piqued at the Princess Anne, and spoke of her with little kindness. She told me the King and Queen had both invited her to make them a visit into England; but she was grown old, and could not leave the Elector and her family, otherwise should be glad to see her own country (as she was pleased to call it) before she died, and should willingly have her bones laid by her mother's in the Abbey at Westminster, whom she always mentioned with great veneration. She took it unkindly, that the Duke of Zelle should have the garter before her husband, who she thought might have expected it on her account, and told me she was once like to have been married to King Charles the Second, which would not have been worse for the nation, considering how many children she had brought, to which I most sincerely agreed."

Among the papers discovered after the death of William the Third, were several in a chest, endorsed

in his own hand, " Letters of the Electress Sophia to the Court of St. Germains." The Electress was a great letter-writer, and kept up a correspondence with many persons, not only in Germany, but in France and in England. She still continued her affectation of learned society, and her amiable indifference to the notorious invasion of her conjugal rights by the profligate Countess Platen, whilst equally heedless of the persecution of her innocent and noble-minded daughter-in-law by her son's and her husband's mistresses.

The Crown Prince, since the fracas we described in the last chapter, pursued a sullen behaviour to his consort, as far removed from affection as from respect. By Mademoiselle Schulenburg he had had one daughter, who was christened Petronelle Melusina. She was born in the year 1693. Of her fate and fortune we shall have to speak presently. Whether he had any offspring by Madame Weyke, is not quite clear, but that lady had two children, and it is exceedingly uncertain who was their father. Her elder sister had also two children, a boy and a girl,—the former born in 1674, and the latter in 1678. We have not heard that the Elector laid claim to either, but had such been

the case, he could have found very many competitors for that honour, besides her husband. Let this have been as it may, it is certain these women were paramount at the Court of Hanover, and that they united in one eager wish to destroy that admirable woman, whose virtues they could not but regard as so many reproaches of their own degraded condition.

The Princess Sophia Dorothea had, since her return, lived anything but a comfortable life. She passed her time almost entirely with her children, to whom she proved herself a most tender mother, and with Mademoiselle Knesebeck, who was, besides them, almost her only associate. She was now surrounded by enemies, and constantly under surveillance. Even her women servants had, on various pretexts, been removed by the Countess Platen, for others, who acted as spies, and reported everything she said and did. The Princess was made aware of this; but she seemed stupified by despair, and desired never to be troubled on such subjects. She appeared to be growing as callous of the wrongs daily inflicted upon her, as was that pattern of conjugal content her mother-in-law. Nevertheless she felt the most acute anguish, and

in her correspondence with her mother she never could allude to the part her father had taken against her, without, by the bitterness of her expressions, showing how deeply it went to her heart.

Her dangerous friend, Count Königsmark, had thought it necessary to leave the neighbourhood of the Countess Platen for a time. It has been stated, on pretty good authority, that this lady had, in consequence of her intimacy with the handsome Colonel of the Guards, found herself in a very awkward position—her husband having been absent from her for at least twelve months, on a mission to Vienna, to congratulate the Emperor Leopold on the recent coronation of his son Joseph, as King of Bohemia—and that she only freed herself from it, by remedies injurious to her health. To silence the scandal, which had spread far and wide respecting this intimacy, she had endeavoured to induce the Count to marry her aughter. He, however, declined this honour on scruples of conscience—an excuse she could neither understand nor appreciate: indeed she felt quite indignant at his morality.

He had also, by his devotion to the Princess,

excited her animosity to a great extent. He knew that his actions were closely watched, and that the slightest communication with his unhappy friend was instantly reported by some one or other of the herd of spies by whom her Highness was surrounded. The Count, as we have said, was a man of the world—when what was called "the world" was vitiated and base to the lowest degree. He might have felt some sort of chivalrous devotion to the almost heart-broken Princess, but he was not without some sense of his own safety, and therefore resolved on removing himself from Hanover for a time.

To a gay man of pleasure, like Count Königsmark, there were many places in which society might be discovered existing on principles as loose as those that distinguished Hanover. In this respect the Electorate of Saxony was in a deplorable state. We know not where to parallel the vices of its monarch, or how to convey an adequate picture of the licentiousness of its court. Frederick Augustus the Elector was subsequently King of Poland. Of him a popular writer observes, "His court formed a regular seraglio. When he died it was calculated that he had three hundred and

fifty-four children by his different mistresses." We need only add to this, that he was the Sardanapalus of his age: and that the abominations of which he set the example at Dresden were only rivalled by the atrocities committed at Rome, under the auspices of the Borgias. The sums lavished by this monarch in his expensive extravagances, is said to have amounted to a hundred millions of thalers, or fifteen millions sterling. The entertainments he gave almost exceed belief for the folly which characterized their extreme magnificence. One given at a later period of life when he formed a camp near Mühlberg, lasted thirty days, and he had for his guests forty-seven kings and princes. It was on this occasion a cake was baked measuring twenty-eight feet in length, twelve in breadth, and three in height, which after having been displayed throughout the camp, was cut open with a silver axe by a cook in the disguise of a carpenter.

On another occasion—the marriage of his eldest son—the bride, who was the daughter of the Emperor Joseph I., was borne down the Elbe in a magnificent vessel called the Bucentaurus, got up in the most costly manner, surrounded by a hun-

dred handsome gondolas, and fifteen ships rigged like frigates, each carrying from six to twelve guns, and manned by crews in yellow satin uniforms, with white silk stockings. The King received her at Pirna, in a dress covered with jewels valued at two millions of thalers, and surrounded by a staff of nineteen hundred of the nobility and gentry, six regiments of infantry, three of cavalry, and a body of yeomen eleven hundred strong, headed by the Postmaster General, Baron von Mordar, bearing a heavy golden post-horn enriched with gems. They all went on board the vessels, and accompanied the bride to the environs of Dresden, whence they entered the capital in a hundred and seven carriages and six, accompanied by forty-four generals, a crowd of mounted noblemen and gentlemen, and the whole Saxon army. The ceremony was followed by a festival that was prolonged for a month, in which Augustus and his principal guests represented themselves as the heathen deities, while the lesser stars were content with appearing as demigods, fauns, satyrs, and nymphs.

His extravagances, however, were sometimes better directed, as he erected many beautiful

buildings in Dresden, and established noble picture galleries and museums, to fill which with suitable objects he purchased the collections of Prince Chigi, and those of the Cardinals Albani and Belloni. The account of his unrivalled collection of Chinese, Japanese, and Saxon porcelain, fills five folio volumes. Augustus was a great patron also of alchemists, one of whom, however, after duping him, he caused to be beheaded. Among his expenses not the least item was his establishment of mistresses, who far exceeded in number and personal attractions, that of any European monarch; and some idea of their cost may be acquired from the knowledge that to one only, the Countess von Kosel, he paid twenty millions of thalers for her services.

The state of morals in the capital of the Elector of Saxony was, as may readily be imagined, at a very low ebb indeed, and here it was that the handsome and gallant Königsmark directed his steps soon after leaving Hanover. A life of pleasure, as it was termed, was eagerly sought after by the rich and titled, as the only proper existence for them, and the higher the dignity the greater was the excess to which all the sensual gratifica-

tions were carried. It was clearly apparent that there was a royal road to vice; and gluttony, intoxication, and licentiousness, were the ordinary ways by which it was passed.

A person so distinguished by nature, and so celebrated for his gallantries, was sure not to be overlooked wherever he went, and at the table of the Elector, where he soon found a conspicuous place, he was surrounded by congenial spirits, with whom the jest went round with the wine, till too little discretion was left to enjoy either.

The Count heard many extraordinary tales of gallantry, and was induced to acquaint his new friends with some of his own adventures. The ladies of the Court of Hanover were always interesting objects of scandalous gossip to the gallants of neighbouring courts, and Count Königsmark found a delighted auditory, whose encouragement led him on to more piquant reminiscences. The principal objects of his revelations were the Countess Platen, Madame Weyke, and Mademoiselle Schulenburg, whom he represented as anything but vestals. He brought forward some entertaining anecdotes of each of the court favourites, that must have given his hearers a lively idea of the characters of these worthies.

It has been represented that he had been drinking deeply, and that he spoke without reserve of their infamous conduct—particularly dilating on the wrongs the Princess Sophia Dorothea had been forced to suffer in consequence of their intrigues against her. Of the Count's discretion in relating at a public table scandalous gossip of a woman so revengeful, and at the same time so powerful as the wife of the Elector of Hanover's prime minister, there can scarcely be two opinions; but what shall be said of his bringing in the name of the Princess under such circumstances? Assuredly the wine he had drunk shut out from his mind the folly and the danger of his conduct.

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CHAPTER IX.

COUNT KÖNIGSMARK afforded much amusement to the Court of Dresden, by relating his own intrigues with the Countess Platen. Amongst his laughing audience, however, there chanced to be a nobleman who was in communication with that lady. He had some years previously resided at the Court of Zelle, which he had been obliged to leave: from what cause cannot be more nearly ascertained than that the Princess Sophia Dorothea was in some way involved in it. Most probably he had been a too aspiring suitor, but we know only that he regarded her with no good will, and his sentiments becoming known to the Countess Platen, he was easily engaged in her interests. From him she learned all that the incautious Count had so publicly revealed, and her rage became deadly. Nothing but his

life would now satisfy her revenge, and to destroy him seemed the sole aim of her existence.

She took an early opportunity of exciting the mind of the Elector against him by the most exaggerated account of what he had said about her, her sister, and Mademoiselle Schulenburg, with a comprehensive addition of offensive observations upon the sovereign of Hanover which he had never uttered. The Elector was very much offended with his Colonel of the guards for such behaviour to his and his son's mistresses; but though this was very bad, to speak disrespectfully of his patron was abominable, and he readily gave a promise it should not go unpunished.

There was another offender, against whom this woman's wrath was equally deadly in its tendency. This was the Princess. The Countess now sought to slander away both the life and the reputation of her sovereign's daughter-in-law, by affirming the most horrible calumnies, supported by evidence there can be no doubt she had suborned. The Elector would gladly have treated her with the contempt she deserved, but her influence had become so powerful, that he himself was in fear of it. He temporized. He promised an inquiry.

The Countess even insinuated, that the Princess and the Count were in league with the Duke of Wolfenbüttel, but even this exciting subject failed in blinding the Elector to the absurdity of such a charge. The favourite, stung with her want of success, grew more virulent in her charges; but her patron at last mustered sufficient indignation to tell his companion, that his opinion of the Princess was not to be shaken by assertions without proof.

To obtain such proof was now her great object. She was not scrupulous in the means she employed, and if she could not get the testimony she required, she was determined to get something that should be mistaken for it. Excited by rage, jealousy, and hatred, she had sufficient stimulants at work to bring out all that mischievous talent which had so helped her forward during her career, and moreover, she had at her hand agents of all kinds, of whose readiness at any bad purpose she had ample evidence. She well considered her plans, and when they were mature, satisfied of their success, she kept like a bloated spider, out of sight of her victims, but ready to pounce upon them the moment they got entangled in the intricate web she had spun for their destruction.

Just at this crisis, Count Königsmark returned to Hanover, gay and brilliant as ever, and completely ignorant of the danger in which he stood. He met with but a cold reception at the Electoral palace, but this did not appear to give him any uneasiness.

When he retired to his chamber, he found a note written in pencil, from the Princess, requesting he would visit her that evening. It was an unusual time to go to the Princess's apartments; nevertheless, he went, and was admitted. On some surprise being expressed that he should have ventured there at such an hour, he produced the pencil note. *It was a forgery.* This discovery should have put them on their guard, and the Princess ought to have dismissed her visitor as speedily as possible. But they had much to say to each other, and the Princess had communications to make, an opportunity for which might not occur again.

A long and confidential interview in the presence of Mademoiselle Knesebeck took place. After endeavouring to entertain the Princess with a narrative of his travels and adventures, including an account of what transpired at his last interview

with the Countess, the Count learned from her that her position had become quite intolerable. The conduct of the Crown Prince was such as no woman of womanly feeling could endure, and as he still continued his intimacy with Mademoiselle Schulenburg,* who, with her worthless associates, did all in her power to annoy and insult her; of course no reconciliation had been or could be effected. Feeling it impossible to remain where she was with the slightest hope of comfort, she had desired to return to her parents, but her father's mind had been excited against her by the artful representations of Bernstorf at the suggestion of the Platens, and he had refused to receive her.

The poor Princess had been rendered desperate by the wrongs with which she had been goaded, and expressed her determination to the Count not to remain where she was. Königsmark eagerly caught at this. There can be but little doubt that he was as deeply enamoured

* Mademoiselle Knesebeck, in a brief memoir of these transactions subsequently written by her, states, that the Crown Prince daily grew colder in his behaviour to his consort, till he merely recognised her presence in public. He had a separate bedchamber and suite of apartments.

of the Princess as such a mere man of pleasure could be of a woman of her high rank placed in a position that should have commanded the sympathy and devotion of a more honourable mind. He was ready to do everything and risk everything to assist her views; but it is impossible to imagine such a man disinterested. Mademoiselle Knesebeck, who knew well what was going on, in her revelations* conveys the impression that he was a mere hollow-hearted libertine, who encouraged the unhappy Princess in her desire to abandon her miserable home from the hope it afforded of his being chosen as the companion of her flight. The prospect of running away with a Princess was exceedingly gratifying to his self-love—it was a crowning adventure in the gallantries of Count Königsmark which would render his name more than ever celebrated in all the courts of Europe; it would afford indubitable evidence of an attachment which would at once make him the wonder and envy of all his licentious contemporaries. He was ready

* Mademoiselle Knesebeck, at a subsequent period of her life, as we stated in the previous note, drew up a statement of what fell under her own observation in the affairs of the Court of Hanover at this period, and of this we shall frequently avail ourselves in the following pages.

to resign his employments under the Elector, and prepare everything at his own expense for the immediate flight of the Princess to Paris.

But driven to despair as she was, with a brain almost maddened by the injustice with which she had been treated, the Princess entertained no intention of committing her good name more than she could avoid. She believed Count Königsmark to be a faithful friend—she was grateful for his sympathy—she fancied she could place the fullest confidence in his honour, and was convinced he alone had the power of emancipating her from the degrading treatment which had caused her such intense suffering. As her father would not listen to her urgent prayer to be allowed to retire to Zelle from the persecution and insults she experienced at Hanover, she seemed barbarously shut out from all hope of securing an honourable asylum. A gleam of sunshine, however, was still left her, and in the darkness which enveloped her future, it shone with extraordinary brilliancy.

The Princess had often heard her mother dilate on the virtues of her steady friend, the Duke of Wolfenbüttel. He had expressed no less admiration of the daughter than he had felt for the mother,

and the Princess frequently recalled the sentiments in her favour, to which she had heard him give utterance previously to the ill-omened rupture between the two families. She had seen him very rarely since her marriage, but felt a conviction that in his honourable and chivalrous nature, she should find the comfort she so much required. As a kinsman there could be no impropriety in his affording her an asylum; and she acquainted Count Königsmark that it was her desire and intention, as she had formerly intimated to him, if she could escape from Hanover, to lose no time in placing herself under the protection of Duke Anthony Ulrich.*

The Count, if disappointed by hearing this determination, did not allow any such expression of his feelings to escape him. He promised to place himself entirely at the disposal of the Princess, and to have everything prepared for her flight to Wolfenbüttel with the greatest secrecy, and with as much despatch as his ample means could insure. The interview had already lasted too

* The distance from Hanover to Wolfenbüttel, is a little less than forty miles: therefore, the projected escape of Sophia Dorothea seemed quite feasible.

long, and, with the knowledge they had of the manner in which it had been obtained, was pregnant with danger to both; but it was very late before they had stated all that was necessary each should know, and Mademoiselle Knesebeck had to warn them several times of the lateness of the hour, and of the danger they mutually incurred by the Count's remaining in the private apartments of the consort of the Crown Prince. At last, with many professions of fidelity and devotion, from the Count, and of earnest gratitude from the Princess, the former took his departure under the guidance, to a certain distance from that part of the palace, of the faithful lady in waiting.

The forged letter of invitation was the work of the crafty Countess Platen, (as she subsequently confessed,) who immediately she learned it had produced the effect for which it had been designed, rushed to the Elector, and made such an enormity of the unseasonable visit of Königsmark to the Princess, recommending the Count's imprisonment by so many apparently unanswerable arguments, that he was induced to order his arrest. This, however, he did reluctantly, and was quite unaware to what an extent she was deceiving him, and little

imagined how much he was about to compromise the honour of his family. The old man was so completely the dupe of her assurances and representations, that he even complied with her solicitations to leave the management of this arrest to her, believing, as he jocosely observed, she was anxious to prevent so handsome a man as his Colonel of the Guards being hurt, should he be so rash as to offer resistance. Three *trabants* (yeomen of the guard) and their superior were then placed at her disposal, directions being given them by their sovereign to obey the commands of the Countess Platen, in arresting an individual who would be pointed out to them by her. To this the wily Countess induced him to add, that they were to use their weapons, should it be necessary.

The Countess conducted the soldiers, on quitting the presence of the Elector, into the hall that led by three steps to the apartment facing the Leine Street—from the same place three steps led in another direction to a passage conducting to the adjoining wing of the palace, facing the same street, to the door of the Saloon of Knights. In this apartment, there projected a capacious chimney, behind which the *trabants* were told to

conceal themselves. Whilst they remained here, the Countess furnished them with refreshments, and with as much liquor as she believed would fit them for the desperate work she had in hand. She had chosen her time well, for just when they were ripe for any deed they might be set to do, they heard approaching footsteps. With a hint of the great reward they might expect from the Elector if they exhibited their zeal by seizing his enemy, who she took care to add, having been condemned by the laws, it would be of no consequence how they treated if he attempted to escape —they were ordered to lie close.

It was Königsmark, who, having discovered that all the usual outlets were closed, had been obliged to endeavour to make his exit from the palace out of the Saloon of Knights, through the passage into the hall. He was approaching the chimney, congratulating himself that at last he was close to the outer door of the palace, and should soon be at liberty to accomplish the wishes of the Princess, when suddenly a rush was made at him by several armed men. Notwithstanding his complete ignorance as to the number of his assailants, and that it was too dark to see who and what they were

they did not take him so completely by surprise as they had anticipated.

On leaving the Princess, the forged letter had presented itself to his mind as a snare that could not have been employed without a purpose; that it was the production of an enemy there could be but little question, and he need not have hesitated long before he must have been satisfied who that enemy was. When he ascertained that the doors through which he had hitherto proceeded out of the palace from the Princess's apartments were locked, he began to fear he was enclosed in a trap. He walked cautiously along, and on the first rush of the *trabants* his sword was out of its scabbard before they could lay hold of him.

Urged on by the Countess, and inflamed by the liquor they had drunk, the men attacked him furiously with their weapons. A most desperate conflict ensued, the result of which might have been doubtful—for the Count had inflicted several severe wounds on his assailants—had not the blade of his sword snapped in two. He had endeavoured to give the alarm, but his cries were soon stopped; and, when his weapon became unserviceable, he was easily secured and carried into the adjoining room.

Here the alarmed soldiers discovered that the person they had thus arrested was so severely wounded he could not stand upright. He had just strength to murmur an entreaty to "spare the innocent Princess," though they murdered him, when he fell into a swoon as they were placing him on the floor.

The Countess made her appearance directly the wounded man had been brought out of the hall, and the first object that met his eyes on recovering consciousness, was the face of his malignant enemy bending over him with triumphant malice expressed in every feature. He rallied all his remaining strength to denounce her as the infamous wretch she was, but his mouth was stopped by the foot of his assassin, who pretended she had slipped in his blood, barbarously trod on his wounded face. Life was ebbing fast—too fast either to resent or notice the indignity, and in a few seconds the murdered man breathed his last.

When the yeomen of the guard ascertained that they had killed Colonel Königsmark, their consternation was only equalled by their fear. Of this their wily employer took immediate advantage, by assuring them that they were sure to be hanged

by their sovereign, if they did not all join in representing the Count's death as the effect of his own rashness in resisting his arrest. Stupified by fright, they were ready to promise anything to save their forfeited lives, and when the horror-struck Elector was summoned to see the result of the order he had entrusted to his reckless mistress, they represented themselves as acting only in self-defence, and the Count as madly rushing on his own death.

Nevertheless, their royal master was far from being satisfied; indeed, to do him justice, he was exceedingly angry, and no less grieved at so unjustifiable an act. He overwhelmed the Countess with reproaches for having induced him unwittingly to become the abettor of the assassination of so brilliant an officer as his Colonel of the guards, and seemed quite sensible of the odium which must fall upon him for his culpability in so disgraceful a transaction. The Count Königsmark was so well known, that his death thus secretly effected in the Electoral palace, in the dead of the night, when it became public, would raise a storm of indignation throughout Germany, from which he could never hope to escape.

The Countess at last contrived to pacify him, and, the consolatory plea of all evil doers, represented that as the deed was done it could not be undone, and that a plan yet remained to escape from the consequences that so greatly alarmed him. Her plan was to prevent any knowledge of it transpiring. She then very cunningly showed how this might be accomplished most effectually, and in his urgent desire to escape from the consequences of his own criminality in suffering so unprincipled a woman to possess the power of which she had made so bad a use, he consented that measures should be taken instantly to prevent the Count's death becoming publicly known.

The Countess had little trouble in persuading the *trabants* to save their necks by doing as she desired them. All traces of the murder were soon obliterated. The dead body was unceremoniously cast into the most filthy receptacle that could be found for it, covered with quick lime, and the place walled up. So secretly and so skilfully were these measures taken, that no one in the palace was aware anything extraordinary had occurred during the night, although some persons had heard a slight disturbance of which

they had taken little notice, and from that time to this, notwithstanding suspicions had been created by the mysterious disappearance of Count Königsmark, nothing of a positive nature has been brought forward respecting his fate on which any reliance could be placed.

The different publications that have since appeared, endeavouring to throw light on this dark tragedy, contain little more than the speculations of the writer, or the suppositions of persons not much better informed. Of the statements that appeared in England, Horace Walpole's is to the effect, that the Count was strangled on leaving the apartments of the Princess, and his body secreted under the flooring of her dressing-room, where it was discovered in the reign of George the Second, during his first visit to Hanover, on making some alterations in the palace. "George the Second," adds Walpole, "entrusted the secret to his wife, Queen Caroline, who told it to my father; but the King was too tender of the honour of his mother to utter it to his mistress, nor did Lady Suffolk ever hear of it till I informed her of it several years afterwards."

Archdeacon Coxe makes a near guess at the

truth, when asserting that Königsmark was discovered quitting the chamber of the Princess by the Elector, who had been concealed in the gallery by the Countess Platen, "and was instantly assassinated by persons whom she had suborned for that purpose." The German works indulge in various explanations of the mystery, none of which, however, can be traced to an authentic source. Mademoiselle Knesebeck, in her narrative, seems to have been aware that the Count was slain while resisting being arrested, but does not enter into any particulars.

The account we have given is derived from two of the principal actors in the murder. One being the Countess Platen, who made a confession of her criminality on her death-bed; the other being one of the *trabants*, named Busmann, who on his death-bed also made a confession; and, a rather singular coincidence, both penitents were attended by the same clergyman—a M. Kramer.

Thus, then, perished that brilliant adventurer, Count Königsmark, whose large fortune, rare talents, handsome person, and exalted position at court, could not save him from the vengeance of an offended courtezan, who suddenly struck him

down, even in the palace of his sovereign, depriving his soul of the consolations of a Christian, and bestowing on his body the sepulture of a dog. Although far from being admirers of such delusive recommendations as he possessed, and unfavourably disposed towards him in consequence of his laxity of morals and want of principle, we cannot withhold our sympathy from the victim of one of the most cold-blooded assassinations ever planned. Moreover, his dying entreaty in favour of the Princess showed he possessed a spirit worthy of a better atmosphere than that of a depraved court, and under more favourable circumstances than those by which he had the misfortune to be surrounded, it is not improbable he would have been an honour to his country, and an ornament to the world.

Of the family of Count Königsmark, his mother survived till the year 1698. Her daughter, Amelia Wilhelmina, became the wife of Charles Gustanus von Lowenhaupt, a Swedish nobleman. The adventures of the elder sister would fill a volume. At the Count's decease, a large sum was lying at his banker's at Hamburg, which they refused to give up to his family, because there was

no legal evidence of his death. Aurora was very young, very accomplished, and very beautiful—was without a protector, and almost without funds. She hastily determined on appealing to the Elector of Saxony, and started for Dresden. Frederick Augustus beheld her claims in her personal attractions. He was not likely to trouble himself much about the chicanery of Hamburg bankers, even for the sister of Count Königsmark, whom he had so lately entertained; but the suitor he saw before him was not to be denied by a monarch with such a reputation for gallantry. He in turn became a suitor, and as he left no means untried to dazzle and captivate the youthful Aurora, she in due time became numbered with the very numerous band who shared his august affections.

She gave birth to a son in the year 1696, but during her indisposition she had the mortification to find that she had been superseded in the heart of her royal lover by a new favourite. In no slight disgust she retired to the Abbey of Quedlinburg, where she employed herself in the nurture, and subsequently in superintending the education, of her son. Of this sisterhood of Protestant Nuns, the beautiful Countess Königsmark

became Deaconess. She amused herself by writing German poetry, which has been carefully preserved, and was a model of propriety to the fair community over whom she presided. A few years passed by, and Augustus found himself likely to be involved in a war with no less an opponent than Charles XII. In this dilemma he remembered the talents of the fair recluse, and there is every reason to believe he did not forget her charms. He prevailed on her, in 1702, to go from him to the King of Sweden, on a diplomatic mission. But such an old soldier as Charles XII. was not to be deluded. He would not grant an interview to the beautiful ambassador: on hearing this, she said, with an air of pleasantry, that she was very unlucky to be the only person in the world on whom that great prince would turn his back. On returning to Saxony she again devoted herself to her son, who well repaid her attention. He is known in history as the celebrated commander, Maurice Marshal Count Saxe. Sir Nathaniel Wraxhall, in his amusing recollections, mentions having met with a Count Liewen, in Sweden. He had visited the Countess Königsmark, at the abbey of Quedlinburg, and stated, "that her person

was then wonderfully attractive, though she was in the decline of life." To the Baron de Pöllnitz has been attributed a little romance, much quoted in its day, founded on her story, entitled "La Saxe Galante;" but a more trustworthy authority is Cramer's "Leben der Aurora von Königsmark."

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CHAPTER X.

As soon as Count Königsmark left the Princess she began to employ herself in packing up her jewels, and making the necessary preparations for her journey. She was thus engaged all night; her labour frequently interrupted by ominous forebodings, arising out of her reflections on the forged note that had led the Count, at so unseasonable an hour, to her apartments. Her disquietude was greatly increased by learning, early in the morning, that some of the Count's servants were waiting in the street, and she quickly ascertained that their master had not been seen by any of his domestics since he entered the palace on the previous night. She was also made acquainted with a circumstance of a more alarming character, which was a domiciliary visit and

seizure of all his papers. This intelligence made the Princess extremely uneasy, for among his correspondence were many letters she had written to him, in which she knew she had expressed herself with more freedom than was prudent.

Anxiety for herself, however, soon gave place to fears for him. Her only hope was that he had got timely knowledge of the proceedings that were to be taken against him, and had made his escape; but she could gain no information that would warrant such a conjecture, and remained a prey to the most fearful anxieties and forebodings.

It was quite true, that shortly after the death of the unfortunate Königsmark, his residence had been entered and searched, at the suggestion of the Countess Platen. The weak-minded Elector appears to have been quite bewildered by the responsibility he had incurred; and although he had just had such convincing proof of the mischief that must arise from permitting his mistress to meddle in state affairs, he allowed the Count's papers to remain in her possession, to abide her report of their nature and tendency. This permission was of vast importance to her, for it

enabled her to get possession of her own letters, which would have criminated herself, and to bring forward such documents as might be employed as evidence against the illustrious lady whom she regarded with so malignant a hatred. The letters of the Princess to Count Königsmark abounded with expressions which, although they showed nothing beyond a sense of security in her correspondent's devotion to her interests, with all a warm-hearted woman's eloquent gratitude for this sympathy for the sufferings and wrongs she was forced to endure, might be made to assume the aspect of an illicit passion.

But it could not be denied they possessed other features, which, if properly employed, might bear strongly against the writer. They contained severe reflections upon the female coterie that governed the Elector and his son, both of whom were alluded to in terms far from respectful. The Princess also occasionally mentioned her father, with such strictures on the barbarity of his conduct towards her as he had but too well deserved. But the most injurious portion of these communications mentioned her intended flight to Wolfenbüttel; a project which the wily Countess

knew would sooner than anything completely prejudice the jealous Elector against her.

All these apparently criminatory portions of the papers of the slaughtered Colonel of the Guard, the Countess laid before her sovereign, with the most inflammatory comments. The design of his daughter-in-law to seek an asylum with the hated Duke Anthony Ulrich, did all the mischief that was expected from it. Count Platen was commanded to proceed instantly to Zelle, to acquaint the Duke and Duchess of the criminal proceedings in which their daughter was involved. Of course the Count gave his own version of what had transpired, and in mentioning to the Duke the discovered correspondence of the Princess with Königsmark, he dilated on the derogatory expressions she had employed to stigmatise her father, with a degree of loyal indignation worthy only of so practised a courtier. The Duke of Zelle found his self-love wounded to the quick, and became extremely indignant, and very greatly incensed. He proved himself just the easy dupe he was expected to be, and breathed nothing but denunciations against his innocent and unhappy child.

The Duchess heard the evil tidings with a heart smote with grief for the situation in which her daughter was placed. She knew too well the character of the infamous *clique* by which the Princess was surrounded, to believe more of the specious tale she had heard than sufficed to show the very hazardous position in which she now was. The distracted mother presently hastened to Bernstorf. She forgot all the humiliations the man had made her endure—she forgot the unworthy artifices by which he had so long acted as a ready agent of the infamous Platens—she thought only of the influence he possessed with her consort, and that he might be prevailed on to exert it at the court of Hanover, to rescue her beloved child from the destruction that threatened her, and she offered the sordid traitor a considerable bribe to induce him to interfere. Bernstorf chuckled in his hollow heart at the humbled tone of his once imperious mistress, but he avoided pledging himself to do what was required of him, though he promised his best exertions, deferring further consideration of the subject till the Princess had been heard in her own defence.

This appeal, as might have been expected, was perfectly unprofitable.

While Count Platen was at Zelle, letters arrived from the Princess to her parents, urging them, in the most passionate terms, to come forward for her protection, and not abandon her to her misfortunes; but they made no impression on the sullen and vindictive father, and the mother found herself perfectly powerless to stir hand or foot in her daughter's favour.

After the Elector had himself examined the papers of the deceased Count, he expressed his conviction that his daughter-in-law was innocent of any improper intimacy with Königsmark, and that her letters proved only that her feelings had been greatly excited, and that she had received erroneous impressions, which she had much too hastily ventured to express.* She

* These letters of Sophia Dorothea were preserved till the year 1732, when the "*Histoire Secrete de la Duchesse d'Hanouvre*" appeared, and created considerable sensation, as the object of this publication appeared to be to defend Bernstorf, then recently deceased. We shall presently have to relate what became of them.

was, however, placed under strict *surveillance.* This did not prevent her from making an application to her father-in-law not to withdraw his favour from her, and to allow her to retire to the territory of Zelle. In return, she received a courteous reply, that promised nothing, and made known nothing respecting her fate.

Shortly after this, Count Platen returned from his embassy to Zelle, where, with the assistance of his equally unprincipled coadjutor, Bernstorf, he had succeeded in making on the weak mind of the Duke of Zelle such an impression of the unfilial conduct of his daughter to him, and of her disgraceful connexion with Count Königsmark, that they easily obtained his consent to a separation between her and the Crown Prince. Count Platen did not fail to represent the result of his embassy in as unfavourable a light as possible, which so greatly prejudiced the Elector against the Princess, that he sent her word she had so grossly misconducted herself he could no longer permit her to remain at his court, but should send her back to Zelle. A determination that was very far from being regarded with dissatisfaction.

Count Platen was commissioned to deliver this message, but, with the insolence of the contemptible scoundrel he was, he could not resist the opportunity of insulting the victim of his wanton wife's machinations, and addressed to her a question respecting her alleged criminal intimacy with Königsmark of the most revolting character. The spirit of a Princess of the House of Brunswick was not to be trampled on by so mean a wretch as this, and she scornfully answered she imagined he mistook her for his own wife, whose intrigue with the Colonel of the Guards, and its awkward consequences, were matters of the most public notoriety. Hitherto the Princess had been kept in entire ignorance of the fate of Königsmark; but Platen, stung by the retort he had just heard, in brutal terms, mentioned that the Count, on leaving her apartments after midnight, had been killed in resisting his arrest, by the Elector's orders.

This was a stunning blow to the poor Princess, and it completely deprived her of all sense of prudence and self-control. There cannot be a question of her being free from any guilty passion for the unfortunate Colonel of the Guards; but she

had known him from childhood, and he had always appeared to her one of the most faithful and devoted of the very few friends she possessed; and to learn that she had been the cause of his losing his life gave, in her present excited state, a dreadful shock to her feelings, and she burst out in a torrent of passionate lamentations, that afforded, in the opinion of her cowardly insulter, the most convincing proof of her improper intimacy with the Count. Her active and unrelenting enemies made a great deal of these exclamations in their report to the Elector and to his brother, which increased the prejudice both had been made to entertain.

A short time previously to these transactions the Crown Prince had proceeded to Berlin on a visit to his sister and brother-in-law, the Queen and King of Prussia. The Queen of Prussia remonstrated with him on the unjustifiable conduct he had pursued towards his unhappy consort, and so wrought upon his feelings that he was induced to write to his neglected wife, desiring a reconciliation. This letter must have fallen into the hands of the Platens; for when the Princess heard that the return of the Crown Prince was

expected, she again urged her desire to leave Hanover. It was represented by her enemies that this impatience to be gone, because her husband's return was expected, after he had written so affectionate a communication, was undoubted evidence of her guilt. But instead of being ashamed to meet her consort, of whose wishes for a reconciliation it is presumed she knew nothing, she was most probably in that state of agony of mind from the excitement she had undergone, that, dreading fresh insults from one from whom insults had become familiar to her, she had become nervously anxious to remove out of his way.

Seeing this determination in his daughter-in-law, the Elector deputed Count Platen to acquaint the Princess, that she might leave Hanover. She lost no time in making the necessary preparations; but the most trying ordeal she had to go through was in taking her farewell of her children. Prince George was about ten years old, and Princess Sophia Dorothea eight, and they had from their birth been the chief solace and gratification of their unhappy mother. Her attention to them had been incessant, her love to them unbounded; many bitter tears had been

shed over them, and more, much more, the happiness their presence inspired had kept unshed. Now it was her hard lot to part from them, most probably for ever,—to leave them in the hands of her enemies, who would be sure to turn their childish love into scorn and aversion. This was a terrible grief; the most unpalatable drop in the cup of bitterness that had been prepared for her. But to her great relief the parting with her children was deferred on various pretexts, having for their object a reconciliation between the Princess and her consort.

She was not allowed another interview with her faithful friend and confidant. Mademoiselle Knesebeck had been arrested and kept a close prisoner, and subjected to long and severe cross-examinations;* but her evidence was conclusive of the entire innocence of her royal mistress of any improper intimacy with the Colonel of the Guards. Notwithstanding such was her testimony, and no charge whatever could be brought against this lady, the animosity of the Platens had been so strongly excited by her devotion to the Princess,

* The questions put to her, with their answers, may be seen in Cramer's Aurora von Königsmark, vol. i. p. 76.

that they caused her to be kept in confinement, which most probably would have lasted her life, had not her prison, the Castle Schartzfeld on the Harz, been discovered by her friends, who devised a plan for her liberation.

The castle in which Mademoiselle Knesebeck was immured was garrisoned by veterans and invalids, and her only attendant was a soldier's wife. Her health suffered much, and though wine was ordered for her by the doctor permitted to visit her, she could obtain only some common German spirit mixed with water. After the prisoner had been there several years, the roof of the building, particularly over her chamber, being in a very dilapidated state, and a tiler happening to come into the neighbourhood, he was engaged to make the necessary repairs.

Mademoiselle Knesebeck one day was attracted by a knocking over her head, and looking up discovered a hole in the roof, through which a man's face was visible. Her alarm was soon allayed, and turned to the most intense gratification, on the stranger making known to her, that in the disguise of a tiler repairing the roof, he was a friend, whose sole object there was to effect her

rescue. They soon came to an understanding, and on the first favourable opportunity Mademoiselle Knesebeck was drawn by ropes through the hole in the roof, and thence lowered till she found herself on her feet outside the prison walls. She fled to Wolfenbüttel, where she was in perfect safety. Mademoiselle Knesebeck never again saw her beloved mistress, but a few years subsequently she had the honour of being taken into the service of her daughter when Queen of Prussia, for whose information she drew up an account of what she knew of the sufferings of the Princess Sophia Dorothea.

The commandant of the castle, when told his prisoner was no where to be found, appears to have been exceedingly puzzled, and partook of the superstitious dread which her disappearance created amongst the garrison, for in his report to the minister at Hanover, he states that the prisoner had fled, in all probability, through the air, with an evil spirit in the disguise of a tiler,—no other way of escape being possible,—as evidence of which, he added there was still to be seen the hole in the roof, which, in consequence of the mystery connected with it, every tiler who had

been applied to, had refused attempting to repair.

We must return from the lady in waiting to her less fortunate mistress. Although such cunning use had been made of everything that could in any way be brought against the Princess Sophia Dorothea, neither the Elector nor his consort was satisfied of her criminality with Count Königsmark; and they appeared desirous of effecting a reconciliation between her and her husband. A deputation, headed by Count Platen, consequently waited upon the Princess with the ostensible object of endeavouring to accommodate matters. Even had such a negociation been entrusted to more respectable hands, it is very doubtful if it would have succeeded. The Princess had had more than enough of the Hanoverian court. Her dearest feelings had been outraged—she had been grossly insulted, slandered, and abused—the friend of her childhood, the only person, with the exception of Mademoiselle Knesebeck, she could regard as a friend, had been slaughtered almost at her door—her lady in waiting had been imprisoned, and herself, though the consort of the Crown Prince, had been wronged by the vilest accusations.

She knew that while the state of things continued, which had produced the evils under which she suffered, no confidence could be placed in any friendly proposals from the court, and her mind had become so disorganised by the shock she had received, that the very idea of continuing to live under such circumstances was exceedingly repugnant to her. But to send a person so distasteful to her as Count Platen, charged with a mission requiring so much delicacy and good taste, was a fatal oversight. For, in the first place, the Princess was indisposed to pay any attention to so contemptible a messenger, and in the next, the prime minister was extremely averse to anything likely to lead to the re-establishment of harmony in the royal family, and would very readily do all in his power to prevent it.

Count Platen entered upon his embassy in a manner as offensive as possible, and omitted nothing likely to render more secure the resolution the Princess had taken. Determined not to miss an opportunity of insulting her, he began by putting two questions to her; the first was—

"Whether she had lived in illicit intercourse with the late Count Königsmark?"

She treated this unmanly insult with a calm contempt. The second question was—

"Had she, regardless of the feelings of the Electoral family, determined on quitting the court to seek refuge with the sovereign of Wolfenbüttel?"

To this she replied, "She had intended in the first instance seeking her mother, and should she be denied the consolation she required, she undoubtedly had it in contemplation to withdraw herself from the Crown Prince, and seek an asylum in the dominions of Duke Anthony Ulrich." Respecting the other question, to which she then thought proper to pay some attention, she answered in a manner that produced a powerful impression in her favour, denying solemnly the slightest thought of such a crime, and requesting, as a proof of her innocence, that the holy sacrament might be administered to her.

This interview was reported to the Elector and his consort, who seemed gratified at the readiness of the calumniated Princess, to test the truth of

her declaration of innocence, in a way so unanswerable. The Countess Platen interposed, and affected to be quite shocked at such hardihood. She laboured to convince her sovereign, that compliance with such a request was out of the question, and that so sacred a religious rite would sink into contempt if employed under such circumstances, as she was in possession of the most positive testimony of the guilt of the Princess. The Elector was disposed, as far as he dared, to act justly by his daughter-in-law, and, previously to taking any further proceedings, he despatched a messenger to inquire the opinion of his brother the Duke of Zelle. The Countess, by the same hand, conveyed secret instructions to Bernstorf, as to his line of conduct in such an emergency.

Bernstorf strove hard to win his dirty wages, but for once the heart of the father rose superior to the sophistry of the traitor in whom he reposed such confidence: he declared that his daughter's request was not to be refused, because in his territories, every one was at liberty to make a similar solicitation.

Compliance with the wishes of the Princess was therefore resolved on, and care was now taken to

render the ceremony as solemn and impressive as possible. An altar was erected in one of the Princess's apartments, and the chief officers of the Courts of Zelle and Hanover were assembled to witness the sacred service. A clergyman commenced the proceedings with a most effective address, that should have touched the consciences of the most sinful of his congregation. After this the Princess, in a spirit evidently of the most fervent humility and devotion, partook of the holy communion. Among the unprejudiced portion of the spectators but one feeling existed, and this was entirely in favour of the Princess; but great excitement was created amongst them when they observed the Princess, at the conclusion of the ceremony, turn to Count Platen, whom she requested to solicit his wife to testify *her* innocence by partaking of the sacrament as she had done.

Here it might be supposed the cause of truth and innocence would have triumphed, but the sufferings of the Princess were far from being at an end. Bigotry and intolerance, folly and revenge, treachery and slander, were hard at work, striving to effect the ruin of this noble lady. Desperately intent on consummating their wicked

designs were the worthless crew who were banded against her; but of all her enemies, and amongst them he most assuredly must be classed, none was so implacable as her father. This shallow-witted animal allowed himself to be the dupe of his faithless prime minister, and all the solicitations of his admirable wife only elicited the unfeeling reply—"that the time had gone by when assistance could have been rendered the Princess, and she would have no one to reproach but herself were she treated in the manner most persons anticipated."

The Elector was more rational, and affected some consideration for his son's consort. Whether he entertained any compunctious visitings for the insulting treatment she had received, or was afraid, by carrying things on too hastily, that his long-cherished project of uniting the dominions of the two families might be set aside, cannot be proved; but it is more than probable that he was embarrassed by his regrets for the past, and his fears for the future,which induced him to make another effort at conciliation. This, however, was put forth in a shape that the Princess thought could not under the circumstances be recognised by her—it appeared in a message to the effect that would she only

humble herself to acknowledge that she had proceeded too far against her husband, and would promise to live with him under the influence of a better spirit, everything should be forgotten, and her Highness be replaced in her former position.

Although her agreeing to this would be pronouncing her own condemnation, the amiable disposition of the Princess was touched by the apparent kindness of the message, and she hesitated in giving her answer. Her father's confidential counsellor, Bernstorf, was in Hanover at this period, and the rash thought presented itself to her mind of applying to him for advice. She knew not the plotting traitor she was so ready to take into her confidence; she remembered only, that the man was accounted shrewd and able, and that her father thought him a phœnix amongst statesmen, called him to her counsels and requested his opinion.

The paid agent of the Platens did not take long to decide. He knew the sentiments of his employers, and believed it most to his interests to serve them, no matter to what fate he was hurrying the daughter of his sovereign. He therefore affected a vast degree of sincerity, and an edifying

air of mingled indignation and sympathy, and urgently advised her not to humble herself, because by so doing she would confess having been in the wrong, but to continue her requests for a separation, because he could assure her, from her father, that he would receive her, and would not allow of her living henceforth under the tyranny of the Crown Prince.

This artful and most delusive advice had all the effect expected from it. It was eagerly embraced by the unhappy sufferer, whose feelings had been too grossly outraged to allow of her knowing any sense of security, should she return to those domestic enjoyments of which she had been so long and shamefully deprived; she therefore began to complain of the harsh treatment she had experienced from the Elector, in forbidding her to appear at court; and stated, that neither at this time, nor at any future period, would she consent to live again with the Crown Prince, but that she preferred living with her parents.

This determination caused quite a commotion among all the persecutors of the Princess. They at once agreed to let her have her own way as far as the Crown Prince was concerned, but her wish

to live with her parents met with universal opposition. The Elector disallowing it at the instigation of the Countess Platen, the Crown Prince opposing it through the representations of Mademoiselle Schulenburg, and the Duke of Zelle, under the auspices of the watchful Bernstorf, denying it with various unfeeling observations, that spoke as little in recommendation of his head as of his heart.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE great point to be considered now was, how to get rid of the Princess with the greatest security to the Electoral family, and immense pains were taken to find out the proper machinery, and render its application as secure as possible. A Consistorial Court was established, to be composed of lawyers the most learned in the practice of the ecclesiastical courts, to be found in Zelle and in Hanover; and they were to examine into the merits and demerits of the Crown Prince and his consort, and having heard evidence on both sides, were to pronounce whether their case admitted of a divorce. Here were materials that required rather delicate handling, for, as the result proved, it was not thought advisable to expose too freely the misconduct of the heir to the Electorate, and there existed a desire to avoid offence to the Duke of Zelle, by in-

sisting too violently upon the alleged intrigues of his daughter. Both husband and wife, therefore, were to be treated with consideration, and the case for interference was to be made out, by incompatibility of temper in the Prince and his consort, and a mutual desire to dissolve their matrimonial shackles.

Considerable solemnity was given to the aspect of this court, and much was attempted to show that the Princess should obtain justice; but little penetration was required to see that it was but an elaborate trick to put unchallenged upon a defenceless and innocent woman, as large a measure of tyranny as could have been perpetrated under a government of the most despotic character.

As these proceedings, it was expected, would take up some time, and the Princess was urgent to leave Hanover, permission was granted for her to set out on her journey, and after a most affecting interview with her children, whence she was carried in a state of insensibility to her carriage, she left the dominions of her father-in-law, and there is little doubt, notwithstanding the wretchedness of mind caused by her parting with the very few beings for whom she felt any regard, and the grief

she felt for the death of Königsmark, she experienced a sensible gratification in passing its boundaries. She was conveyed into the Duchy of Zelle, but without being allowed to hold any communication with her parents, and her destination for the present was Lauenau.

Towards the end of August, 1694, the consistorial court was organized. M. Busche was appointed president, with four judges on the part of Hanover, and as many on the part of Zelle. Scarcely had their proceedings commenced, when, on the 18th of September, Counsellor Livius, in the name of the Crown Prince, exhibited what we must designate as articles of complaint, to the effect that the Princess, his consort, had, in her conduct towards him, evinced neither love nor obedience—that she had left her home to visit her parents at Bruckhausen, to whom she had made unfounded complaints against him, but her father having admonished her and advised her return, she had driven past Herrnhausen, the summer residence of the Electoral family, where every preparation had been made for her reception, and gone on to Hanover—that he, the said Crown Prince, had subsequently frequently visited her,

and had written an affectionate letter to her from Berlin, yet had failed in effecting any alteration in the disposition towards him of the Princess, his said consort, who, when made aware of his expected return, became the more eager to travel to the territory of Zelle. Consequently the Princess, his said consort, had intentionally abandoned him, the said Crown Prince, and had, moreover, expressed a determination never henceforth to live with him, in which determination it was evident she was sincere. A separation of marriage was therefore prayed for.

We believe so weak a case was never brought into an ecclesiastical court. It is scarcely possible to regard without astonishment the studied concealment in this complaint of the various accusations which had led to and arose out of the sanguinary tragedy enacted in the hall of the electoral palace. Königsmark appears to be entirely forgotten. The insinuations, nay, even the undoubted proofs—as they were impudently styled—of the Countess Platen, had been passed unnoticed. The homely proverb, "That they who live in glass-houses should not throw stones," was in this instance most religiously respected. The slaughter of the

Colonel of the Guards occasioned some inquiry, and the examinations of the Princess, her lady in waiting, and one of the yeomen of the guards, elicited that a forged letter had invited the Count to the apartments of the Princess, and that the Countess Platen had been seen to rifle the corpse, and take such a paper from his possession. Notwithstanding a great deal of clever explanations and representations from the Countess, the affair began to assume a very ugly aspect as far as she was concerned, and as the establishment of her criminality would have had an awkward effect on both the Elector and his son, it was judged expedient to say as little in reference to so dangerous a subject as possible.

The Crown Prince, it may also be remarked, made another omission, that might have equally affected the complexion of the case—he said nothing of his insulting neglect, and of his notorious intrigues, and he had passed over in silence the brutal conduct that had driven his unhappy consort from his roof to seek the consolation and advice of her parents. But Counsellor Livius was well aware of what he was about; he had permitted his client's case to appear a very weak one,

because had he referred either to the alleged misconduct of either plaintiff or defendant, it would have damaged it most effectually.

After this, Bulow, grand marshal of the Court, and Thies, the counsellor of the Court, acting as Sophia Dorothea's solicitor, proceeded to Lauenau, by the direction of the Duke of Zelle, to receive the instructions of the Princess, and obtain her declaration whether she intended returning to her consort, or would submit her cause to the decision of the consistorial court. This declaration was thus expressed:—

"By the grace of God, Sophia Dorothea, &c.

"Since our illustrious husband, George Lewis, Crown Prince of Hanover, has caused to be delivered to the matrimonial court in Hanover constituted to try this case by our father and father-in-law, a complaint of desertion against us, and has requested a complete separation of marriage between our husband and us, as we have learned from this complaint, and a communication from the court that made it known to us; and since our lord and father has sent to us his president and grand marshal of the court,

von Bulow, at this place, that we might make known what we thought best, according to our comprehension respecting such complaint of desertion, and that we should instruct for that purpose the counsellor of the court, Rudolph Thies, in order to convey our declaration to the said matrimonial court for its information, leaving the circumstances mentioned by the attorney of our lord and husband undisturbed. We declare, for the rest, as we well understand our intention, and in accordance with the contents of the aforesaid complaint, have well and freely considered it, that we still adhere to our oft-repeated resolution never to cohabit matrimonially with our husband, and that we desire nothing so much as that separation of marriage requested by our husband may take place. And thereupon we herewith empower and command our solicitor, the counsellor of the court Thies, to present this our declaration in answer to the letter of the 20th of September, 1694, sent to us by the aforesaid court.

In witness whereof we have signed this with our hand, and fixed to it our seal.

(Signed) SOPHIA DOROTHEA.

Lauenau, September 26, 1694.

This declaration was communicated to the proper quarter; but, after a debate amongst the lawyers, it was not judged sufficient. Thies again waited on the Princess at Lauenau, on the 24th of October, with a document to which she was required to give her consent; and although it was expressed in a manner that surprised her, from some alteration being made in her title, she, in the expectation of expediting the business, gave it her sanction. Even this concession helped them but little, and the lawyers thought an arrangement out of court would be the most sensible conclusion to proceedings in which in court they did not see their way very clearly.

In the hope of producing a reconciliation, the President Busche and the Superintendent Molan were deputed to wait on the Princess. On announcing their names they were immediately admitted. The Princess received them courteously, but with a dignified bearing that equally became her birth and her innocence.

We learn from excellent authority that the President commenced by explaining the object of the visit, and stated that the consistorial court had been much surprised by the con-

tents of the communication that had been laid before it, particularly as to the determination of her highness not to live with her consort, for which no reason had been given; but being well aware what disadvantage to her cause might be produced by an intention so hostile, what grief she would cause her parents, and to what extent she would injure her reputation, while by acting differently, how readily she might regain her princely rank, they could not but advise her to return to her husband,—a proceeding which mature reflection would show was greatly to be recommended, and let it not be forgotten, he added, was commanded by religion.

While his worthy principal took breath, M. Molan entered into a dissertation on the duties of matrimony, showing how firmly every one was bound by them, and proving, or at least endeavouring to prove, that married people could not separate without the intervention of the Almighty. Should such separation be attempted independently of the Divine will,—he was so good as to say,—it must create the displeasure of the Deity, as has been recorded in the Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, chap. vii. verse 10, which shows

what peril is incurred by those who act in opposition to such Divine ordinances.

The Princess listened patiently and respectfully, remarking that these were very good arguments, but she yearned for a life of peace, and though by her firmness she might be the greater sufferer, it was her intention to adhere to her determination as one most for the benefit of her soul. She had, she said, loved the world too much, and since Providence had led her away from it, and she found the change salutary, she resolved, though it was a severe punishment, not to return to the Crown Prince.

There was, or rather there appeared to be, a vast sacrifice in this voluntary abandonment on the part of a Princess by birth, of the honours and advantages of her high station; but there must also be taken into consideration the humiliating position with which such distinctions were to be worn. She could not endure becoming a cipher in the train of the Platen clique, and her soul having been chafed so long by their intrigues, she longed ardently to live at peace, as far removed as possible from an atmosphere so impure.

The reasons of the Princess Sophia Dorothea for withdrawing herself from such a court there could be no questioning, yet the two eminent members of the consistorial court appeared very much to call them in question. The Superintendent Molan then remarked, "Your highness may be taking a premature resolution."

"No," replied the Princess, "it has long been forced upon me, has been sufficiently considered, and therefore might well be adhered to."

Mr Superintendent thought this still open to doubt, because the more he became acquainted with the whole affair the more confirmed was he in his opinion. The subject he was satisfied was an important one. Moreover if some unjust reflections had been made, they might be corrected.

Probably this was an allusion to the infamous slanders of the Platens, and held out a promise of justice to their unhappy victim.

"The subject," continued the speaker, "might not have been duly considered, because marriage was not like other contracts, the work of man, but of the Almighty, and His commands should be obeyed, for each party would be obliged to appear before His tribunal and submit to His

judgment of their conduct. Besides which, the duties of a mother were to be considered, as well as how greatly the loss of the Princess would be felt by her young children.

" There were other consequences of a separation," continued the wily advocate, placing in review all the pains and penalties the Princess might draw upon herself " as the culpable party would not be permitted a second union, though this privilege would be allowed to the other side."

This was as much as to say that the poor victim of the heartless conduct of her husband and his infamous associates, would be denied the liberty of marrying again, although it was intended such denial should not extend to the Crown Prince. That she would be " the culpable party," was sufficiently manifest, notwithstanding the impossibility of establishing against her a shadow of guilt; but this threat had no effect upon her. She had had such experience of marriage as left her with a positive disgust of any second experiment of the kind, and as to the re-marriage of her consort, she seemed careless of everything but of getting entirely rid of him.

After these formidable threats, M. Molan re-

marked that the Princess was still young, and might live in grandeur for many years, would she comply with the wishes of the court and the commands of the Almighty, by returning to her proper position, and submitting to reasonable control. He suggested that the affair ought to be reconsidered, under the influence of fervent prayer, in which a clergyman was to assist. In conclusion, he reiterated his remarks on the importance of consideration, and insisted that no one ought to persist in a line of conduct that might hurry him or her into misfortunes.

"There is still time," he added, "and it will be praiseworthy to abandon a resolution once formed, when it is clearly perceptible some part of it is in direct opposition to the will of the Creator. And in this case it is requisite not to adhere obstinately to one's own opinion, in the belief that the favour of Providence could not be forfeited, because thoughts are only deceits of the flesh, which for our own benefit ought never to be allowed to run on and become too powerful."

Not even these admonitions, including the threats, and warnings, and promises the deputation held out, could shake the resolution of the Prin-

cess. She never wavered, but continued to aver that she should be better able to serve the Almighty by remaining alone. At last, finding that their exertions to affect an accommodation were completely misplaced, they took their departure.

There can scarcely be a doubt that this movement was secretly directed by the Elector and his heir, to get themselves out of the false position, by which, through their entanglements with the vile women with whom they were connected, they had been placed. But if they were sincere in their desire to act justly towards the persecuted Princess, they should have shown it by dismissing the infamous coterie that had caused her sufferings. This it was evident they had neither the courage to volunteer, nor the inclination to do; and it was clear enough that the Princess had nothing to hope from the specious arguments for her return to her outraged home their agents had made to her. The unsuccessful result of the deputation must have been a most galling annoyance to the Crown Prince, and in a mind of his narrow capacity it must have produced a decided increase of those hostile feelings, with which his innocent consort had so long been regarded—which hosti-

lity, with the doggedness belonging to his character, he continued to nourish through the remainder of his life.

A report of the conversation that passed between the Princess and the deputation was given to the solicitor of the Crown Prince on the 1st of December, and, a pretty good proof that no further delay was deemed necessary, two days subsequently he directed a document to be given into court, praying for the completion of the desired separation of marriage. The judges then requested the solicitor of the Princess to make this communication known to her, that she might put in her final answer; but her highness chose to produce a written declaration insisting on her testimony, and her legal adviser was told not to enter into any further discussion. However, notwithstanding this, after both counsel had been called before the court on the 28th of December, the following sentence was made known to them.

"In the matrimonial suit of the illustrious Prince George Lewis, Crown Prince of Hanover, against his consort the illustrious Princess Sophia Dorothea, &c., we constituted president and judges of the matrimonial court of the Electorate and Duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg, declare and pro-

nounce judgment, after attempts have been tried and have failed to settle the matter amicably, and in accordance with the documents and verbal declarations of the Princess, and other detailed circumstances, we agree that her continued denial of matrimonial duty and cohabitation is well founded, and consequently that it is to be considered an intentional desertion. In consequence whereof we consider, sentence, and declare the ties of matrimony to be entirely dissolved and annulled. Since in similar cases of desertion it has been permitted to the innocent party to re-marry, which the other is forbidden, the same judicial power will be exercised, in the present instance, in favour of his serene highness the Crown Prince.

" Published in the Consistorial Court at Hanover, December 28th, 1694.

(Signed) " PHILIP VON BUSSCHE.
" FRANCIS EICHFELD, (Pastor.)
" ANTONY GEORGE HELDBERG.
" GUSTAVUS MOLAN.
" GERHARDT ABT.
" BERNHARD SPILKEN.
" ERYTHROPEL.
" DAVID RUPERTUS.
" H. L. HATTORF."

Doubts appear to have been quickly entertained as to the legality of such a decision, and the following memorandum shows that even the legal adviser of the Princess required a security from proceedings in relation to his connexion with her affairs.

"As we have now, after having been made acquainted with the sentence, given it proper consideration, and resolved not to offer any opposition to it, our solicitor must act accordingly, and is not to act or proceed any further in this matter. For the rest, we hereby declare that we are gratefully content with the conduct of our aforesaid solicitor of the Court Thies, and that by this we free him from all responsibility regarding these transactions.

"(Signed) SOPHIA DOROTHEA.

"Lauenau, December 31st, 1694."

The Elector employed every resource to prevent any disarrangement of that union of the two territories he had so set his heart upon. By an enactment bearing the date of the 29th of August, 1694, it had been agreed by the two illustrious brothers that a separation of the marriage of the Crown Prince and his consort should be effected,

the legal measures were stated, and likewise her destination while the affair was pending. It was also therein specified that her domestics should take a particular oath, and that the Princess should enjoy an annual income of eight thousand thalers, (exclusive of the wages of her household,) to be increased one half on the death of her father, with a further increase of six thousand thalers on her attaining the age of forty years. It was provided that the Castle of Ahlden should be her permanent residence, where she was to remain well guarded. The domain of Wilhelmsburg, near Hamburg, was, at the death of the Duke of Zelle, to descend to the Prince, son of the Princess Sophia Dorothea—the Crown Prince, during his own life, however, retaining the revenues; but should the grandson die before his father, the property would then, on payment of a stipulated sum, be inherited by the successor in the government of the son of the Elector. By a further arrangement, the mother of the Princess was to possess Wienhausen, with an annual income of twelve thousand thalers secured on the estates Scharnebeck, Garze, and Bluetlingen; the castle of Lüneburg to be allowed as her residence from the commencement of her widowhood.

These arrangements show the extreme care taken by the politic Elector and his hopeful heir to get rid of the young kinswoman they had previously exhibited such extraordinary anxiety to be related to, yet at the same time to grasp more firmly the possessions, rights, and privileges she had brought into their family by her marriage with the Crown Prince; but they show more than this, for they exhibit the apathy to the interests of his daughter displayed by the Duke of Zelle, and the extent to which he must have been played upon by the Platens, through their agent, Bernstorf, before he could have been brought to take the active part against her which it is but too apparent he did. To what has already been stated we have now to add that he was induced to promise never to see or hold any communication with his repudiated daughter.

The more we reflect on this man's blindness and stupidity, his want of common feeling as well as common discernment, the more surprised we become. His apologists may say that he was a dupe; but there was no slight degree of criminality in his allowing, partly through dread of offending his brother, and partly from wounded self-

love occasioned by the unfilial freedom of his daughter's comments, his prejudices to be directed so forcibly against his only child. But no excuse will avail him. We are afraid a just estimate of his conduct would place him among the least worthy of his species.

The worst portion of the troubles of the Princess Sophia Dorothea concluded with the passing of the sentence of separation, or, more properly speaking, repudiation. Her sufferings had been dreadful, but their very intensity made her better able to endure the degradation her enemies had prepared for her. Indeed, at first she seemed quite to rejoice at the sentence, as an emancipation from an intolerable slavery, and proceeded to the place appointed for her incarceration—for it had been resolved that she should be a prisoner—with a sense of freedom and solace to which she had long been a stranger.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE place appointed for the constant prison of the disgraced consort of the Crown Prince of Hanover was the castle of Ahlden, a small fortress situated on the south bank of the river Aller, and it was commanded that henceforth she should bear the title of Duchess of Ahlden. Her *suite* consisted of a governor, a gentleman in waiting, with sometimes two, and occasionally three, ladies in attendance. These were all spies, creatures of the Countess Platen, who watched the prisoner narrowly, and made known every observation and action they thought of sufficient importance to require a report to their employer. Her confinement was not exactly solitary, for she was permitted occasionally to invite the civil and military authorities of the fortress, as well as the clergyman, and persons from the neighbourhood

were sometimes allowed to pay her a visit; but this society must of course have been very constrained, and under strict surveillance. She was closely guarded, and such restraint put upon her actions as satisfied her that, though she had committed no offence, she was to be considered as a state prisoner.

Her domestics consisted of two pages, two valets, three cooks, one confectioner, one butler, one baker, a head groom, with several subordinates, a coachman, many footmen, at one time fourteen, besides a proportionate number of female servants. The grand marshal of the court at Ahlden, for the first three years, was Julius Augustus von Bothmar; he was succeeded by Count Sigismund Bergest till the year 1721, when he found a successor in George von Bussche. Individuals filling civil situations in the fortress usually acted as gentlemen in waiting. Of the different ladies in waiting on the Princess we have only been able to preserve the names of the two last, which were Lady von Arenswald and Lady von Malortie, All were obliged to take an oath on entering upon their duties, in accordance with the compact of the 29th and 31st of August, 1694,

" that nothing should be wanting to prevent anticipated intrigues and misfortunes, and for the perfect security of the place fixed as a residence for the Princess Sophia Dorothea, in order to maintain tranquillity, and to prevent any opportunity occurring to an enemy for undertaking or imagining anything which might cause a division in the illustrious family." In plain English, to watch the prisoner so closely that there could be no possibility of communication with friends from without.

The commanding officer of the castle had particular instructions on this point; and when the escape of Mademoiselle Knesebeck became known, he maintained more than ordinary vigilance to see them fulfilled. The garrison consisted of infantry and cavalry, and there was a daily parade in the courtyard of the castle. Sentries were posted in every direction, and they manifested as much jealousy of the movements of this helpless woman, as if she had been the most distinguished general of the enemy. When she took an airing, it was always in a carriage, or in a cabriolet. The latter she drove herself, the coachman riding at the side of the vehicle. She was always accompanied by

a cavalry guard with drawn swords, under a military officer, as well as by a civil officer, and her footmen.

Promenading on foot, or walking on the ramparts of the castle, was not permitted, and sentinels were placed on the ramparts, and in the passages, to prevent her going on forbidden ground. She was not allowed to leave the castle, under any pretext, without her customary guard, and so strictly was this order persisted in, that on one occasion, when a fire broke out in one of the chimneys, she was seen pacing to and fro in one of the passages, in a state of terrible anxiety, with her jewel-case under her arm.

The Duchess of Ahlden, as she was now styled, endeavoured to occupy her mind with every kind of employment that presented itself. Among these were the administration of the estates that produced her income, her correspondence, her diary, to which we shall presently allude more at length, and the direction of her household. The instructions for her head cook and butler, her daily bills of fare for her meals, were all written by herself; and she concluded all contracts. But a great part of her time was passed in a course of active benevolence,

and in the most zealous attention to her religious duties. She proved herself a blessing to the whole neighbourhood,—improved their dwellings, interested herself in the instruction of the children of the poor labourers, and sought to ameliorate their condition by every means in her power.

The chaplain performed the religious service every sabbath in the apartments of the Princess; his congregation consisting of the household occupying with himself one room, and the Princess, with her ladies, remaining in the next, which communicated by folding doors. She was not allowed to visit the rural church, notwithstanding she enriched it with an organ, silver candlesticks, altar-cloth, and pulpit-cushion. She was a still greater benefactor to the village; for when a fire nearly consumed it, she gave a large sum for the purpose of having it more commodiously built. Under her auspices, the streets were formed with more regularity, the houses placed at proper distances from each other, and each building was neatly roofed with tiles.

Never did prisoner lead a more useful and honourable life under captivity. She completely triumphed over her slanderers by showing how

admirable could be her conduct under the abuse of power which deprived her of her liberty; and though her position appeared to shut her out from all the ordinary resources of happiness, even of resources so rich in felicity as exist in the society of parents, children, and friends,—she was still possessed of one great consolation, which went as far as anything could to supply so considerable a void, and this was, she was allowed the high and enviable privilege of creating the happiness of others. And nobly was it exercised. The poor, and those who had none to help them, found prompt and liberal asistance; the sick were relieved, the troubled comforted, and the worth of the meritorious acknowledged and rewarded. In her case never was anything more true than that "out of evil cometh good;" for out of the monstrous injustice of confining an innocent woman for life, the natural influence of a generous and noble heart in an impoverished neighbourhood performed marvels of forethought, benevolence, and sympathy. Well was it for the poor farm labourers of Ahlden that this amiable woman was so basely repudiated by her worthless husband.

If she was denied the solace of seeing her oldest and dearest friends, she was permitted to correspond with some of them. Of course unrestrained intercourse in this way was out of the question. Nothing was allowed to pass from her prison that reflected on the power that held her there. Nevertheless, writing became a luxury which she enjoyed with far more delight than ordinary luxuries produce. Her principal correspondent was her mother, whose affectionate consideration and maternal counsel brought a balm to her aching heart, and a comfort to her troubled mind, that often afforded her sufficient philosophy to bear her wrongs in patience. The Princess, however, was not allowed the pleasure of corresponding with her beloved children, those dear ones with whom she had parted with so much regret, and of whom she could never think in her far off prison without tears filling her eyes at the intolerable hardship of being separated from them. Mademoiselle Knesebeck says they were neither allowed to hear of her, nor to speak of her. In course of time the unhappy lady had many correspondents, and found ample occupation for the services of her secretary, M. von Wiedeler.

Amongst the persons to whom she wrote was her uncle the Elector, who, notwithstanding the evil influences to which he had lent himself, entertained the impression that his daughter-in-law had been hardly dealt with. The last years of his life appear to have been much troubled on this account, and it is stated by some authorities that he began to show a distaste for the society of the reckless woman by whom he had so long been governed. But if he ever repented of his ill-spent life, he could not readily divest himself of those feelings of hostility to the Duke of Wolfenbüttel he had cherished ever since he had been made aware of Duke Anthony Ulrich's pretensions to a portion of those possessions he was so feverishly desirous of retaining in his own family. The coalition supposed to exist between Prince Maximilian and the Duke of Wolfenbüttel still more strongly excited his animosity, and he would not rest till, through the arguments of that ever-ready traitor, Bernstorf, he had stirred up his brother, the Duke of Zelle, to invade his kinsman's territory with a considerable armed force. But there its stay was very brief. The cousins came to an understanding; the troops were withdrawn,

and an arrangement made respecting the matter in dispute which appeared to satisfy all parties. The Electress Sophia did not, as far as can be learned, interest herself in the slightest degree for her ill-used daughter-in-law.

On the 28th of January, 1698, the Elector died. He was a striking example of the class to which he belonged,—a minor potentate influenced by a grasping ambition that sometimes rendered him deaf and blind as much to ordinary principle as to common humanity. He, following the fashion much in vogue with many of his contemporaries, employed all his resources to keep up in his court the appearance of power and magnificence, or rather of luxury and licentiousness, which Louis XIV. had rendered so popular among his royal brethren, and to which Augustus, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, had added a thousand profligate follies. He expended considerable sums among those who administered to his pleasure,—women of loose character, as is usual with such monarchs, being the greatest recipients,—and was equally liberal with the agents who assisted in working out his selfish policy with the different courts with whom he sought al-

liance. That he possessed some respectable characteristics we are not disposed to deny, but the manner in which he lent himself to the views of that harpy, the Countess Platen, to wreak her revenge on his innocent daughter-in-law, and on Count Königsmark, damn his reputation to all posterity.

He was succeded in the electorate by his eldest son, the worthless husband of the poor captive at Ahlden; and from the day of his accession to power, her case became utterly hopeless. He was even more than his father had been under the thraldom of his mistresses, who, for their own sakes, took care that the wound the Princess had given to his self-love, by refusing to return to him after he had, as it was represented, condescended to seek a reconciliation, should never be healed. He determined that her imprisonment should be for life; and so doggedly did he continue in his animosity against her, that he could never be induced to relax the jealous watch over her conduct which he had caused to be established.

An agreement was entered into between himself and the Duke of Zelle, in which the latter bound himself to respect the conditions of the

treaty of 1694 regarding the disposal of the Princess, at the same time a treaty was entered into by the same parties respecting the dowry of the Duchess of Zelle, which was raised from eight thousand to twelve thousand thalers per annum, secured on the domains Scharnebeck and Lune, with the castle of Lüneburg as her residence.

The feelings of nature in the Duke were, however, not quite stifled; for after the demise of his brother he made some inquiries about his daughter, and seemed willing to interest himself for her. This demonstration alarmed Bernstorf, who was more anxious than ever to show his servility to the Hanoverian court, entertaining an idea that he might succeed to the post of Count Platen, or be otherwise handsomely provided for. He reminded the Duke of his engagements, and drew such a fearful picture of what might happen to his Duchess and her daughter after his death, should he offend the Elector by any interference in the matter, that the Duke shrunk from his intentions in alarm. Nevertheless upon several occasions he could not withhold himself from betraying manifestations in favour of the unhappy

prisoner which occasioned great uneasiness to his traitorous minister.

After the Princess had been confined ten years, her father expressed a desire to see her; but Bernstorf threw so many obstacles in the way of such an interview, that it was postponed from time to time. That his feelings had undergone a considerable change was manifest from a codicil to his will, which he executed on the 26th of January, 1705. Therein it is stipulated that, as far as concerns the separated consort of the Elector George Lewis, things are to remain as expressed in the marriage settlement of 1682, in the articles 7, 8, 16, and 17; that regarding the lordship of Wilhelmsburg and all other allodial estates, the arrangements made are to be respected, as far as they have not been altered by the agreement of August, 1694. After the Duke's demise the Wilhelmsburg is to belong to his daughter's son, or son's son, in accordance with the rights of primogeniture. Should, however, such progeny not exist, these estates are to be inherited by the Elector George Lewis, or his successor in the government, by paying the stipulated sums. Several legacies

are then mentioned, and finally all the rest of his property he bequeathes to his natural heirs, particularly mentioning his daughter, who is to be satisfied with this bequest and, with what had been done for her by the settlements of 1694 and 1698.

On the same day the Duchess of Zelle provided for her daughter, in case of her own demise occurring previously to that of the Princess, by executing a testamentary document in the French language to the following effect. Besides various legacies and gifts to her servants, this will stipulates that the Duchess of Ahlden shall possess the free use and interest of a capital of sixty thousand thalers deposited in the banks at the Hague and at Amsterdam, in fifty-two obligations, to dispose of in any way she may think proper. Also the estate of Olbreuse, in Poitou, in the kingdom of France, together with the mansion Wienhausen, with all the valuable jewellery, furniture, and plate in the apartments of the Duchess at Zelle. Another bequest is the interest of three thousand thalers annually, from the domain of Hitzacker, during her life, subsequently to be inherited by the children of the Princess in equal shares, and if

the Prince should die, the whole to come to his sister. The will also stated that the Duchess of Ahlden was to reserve during her life-time one half of the income set apart for her use by her separated consort, to go to her daughter, who was to inherit the whole at her death.

The Duke of Zelle confirmed this will, and it was signed by five witnesses. His desire to behold the poor captive became stronger every year, and after his Duchess had succeeded, by urgent remonstrances and entreaties, in obtaining permission to enter the castle of Ahlden, and had represented to her husband his daughter's melancholy condition, cut off, as it seemed, from all human sympathies, his heart relented, and he strove as much as he could to repair the injustice he had sanctioned.

He was now approaching his seventieth year, and finding in the spring that his strength was fast failing him, he expressed his determination to visit the unhappy prisoner in the summer. Bernstorf, as usual, threw every kind of difficulty in the way, and made all sorts of representations, which unfortunately shook the Duke's resolution so far that he deferred his visit till the commence-

ment of the sporting season. The autumn had just set in, and the Duke went out one day to shoot partridges; he caught a severe cold, which made him take to his bed. From this he never rose, for he died on the 28th of August, 1705.

The wily Bernstorf, at the death of his master, whose confidence he had so grossly abused, proceeded to Hanover, and entered into the service of the Elector, who gratified his vanity, while he rewarded his treason, by raising him to the dignity of Count. He soon became all that he had intrigued to be,—the Elector's confidential minister.

The situation of the mother and daughter, thus left without a protector from the resentment of the now all-powerful Elector, presented few features of consolation. He succeeded to his uncle's territories, which became united with his own; and with the power to injure both his fair relatives more than he had already done, it had been sufficiently made manifest that he did not want the inclination. Fortunately for them, he had pressing business on his hands connected with the prosecution of his schemes for succeeding to the English throne on the death of Queen Anne, which, together with the cares of his united

government of Hanover and Zelle, kept him constantly occupied. He merely gave directions for the effectual security of his victim, and turned a deaf ear to her prayers for liberation from a confinement that had long become irksome to her. Her innocent occupations had grown monotonous. The restrictions and the state of espionage under which she existed, at last appeared intolerable. She, it is true, now enjoyed the gratification of seeing her mother, who made her aware, as far as she could ascertain, of everything of importance that was going on in the world that had been closed against her, and afforded her all a mother's consolation and affection; but her warm heart yearned after her children, and every year this yearning became more intense and insupportable.

It is gratifying to know that notwithstanding all the efforts made to keep the young Prince and Princess indifferent to their mother's fate, and ignorant of her existence, in the hearts of both there remained a deeper interest for her than her enemies imagined. In her son this showed itself in a manner that astonished the whole court. On one occasion the Prince was hunting in the neighbourhood of Linsburg, when he was suddenly

missed. The watchful attendants, knowing that Ahlden was at no great distance, surmised that he had stolen away for the purpose of endeavouring to see his mother. To allow such an interview they knew was more than their places were worth, and they proceeded in that direction with all the speed they could use. To their very great satisfaction they overtook him at the Ahlden Knick, a wood about two miles distant from the town, and by their urgent solicitations, and moving representations of his father's anger, induced him to turn back. He acknowledged that his object was to see his mother, and gave up his intention with evident reluctance.

The failure of his attempt sunk deep into his mind. He was too closely watched to be able to repeat the experiment, but he was known to brood uneasily over the strange circumstance of his mother being kept so close a prisoner. For his father there is reason for believing that at this early period he entertained neither respect nor affection. In disposition there were many points of resemblance between them; the Prince possessed much the same dogged obstinacy and deficiency of principle so obvious in his parent, but he

had more capacity, and, though far from being unexceptionable in his conduct, showed a greater respect to the obligations of decency and religion.

The Crown Prince was married, in the year 1705, to Carolina Wilhelmina, daughter of John Frederick, Margrave of Anspach. The lady was born in the same year with himself: unfortunately her father died in her childhood, and her mother took a second husband. She then was brought up under the guardianship of Frederick I., king of Prussia; but the care of her education was entrusted to his second wife, Sophia Charlotte, who appears to have been the cleverest member of her family. Caroline received what was considered a learned education, and became in after years a woman celebrated for the strength of her understanding and the superiority of her attainments. Nevertheless, she never held any considerable influence over the affections of her husband, whose gallantries were as notorious as his want of delicacy.

His sister, the Princess, who bore the same name as her unhappy mother, appears also to have felt a lively sympathy in her misfortunes. The Elector, who was as desirous as his father had been of gaining powerful connexions, succeeded

in marrying his daughter to Frederick William, Crown Prince of Prussia. By the marriage contract it was stipulated that the agreements entered into between Hanover and Zelle should be respected, with a reservation of the rights of inheritance through the Duchess of Ahlden. The Princess received forty thousand thalers as her wedding portion, on renouncing all claim of inheritance to the government of Zelle during the existence of male heirs. This sum, however, was irrespective of what she might inherit from her mother and grandmother.

After the marriage of her daughter, the unhappy state prisoner at Ahlden contrived to communicate with her; and as the Princess, when she departed to Berlin, took into her service the devoted friend of her mother, Mademoiselle Knesebeck, there can be no doubt that she was fully impressed with the wrongs her unfortunate parent had been made to endure. The Duchess of Ahlden wrote, imploring her daughter to use her interest to effect her liberation. We do not think the Prussian court took any steps in consequence of this communication. As the Crown Prince was a thick-headed, insensible brute.

worthy of the selection of the Elector of Hanover, and a domestic despot of the worst description, it is not very likely that he troubled himself about his mother-in-law. His consort soon found that she was powerless to serve her mother in the way she most desired, and was obliged to carry on her communications with her in secresy. In a short time other cares pressed upon her that rendered her correspondence still more difficult. On the 24th of January, 1712, she gave birth to a son, and in little more than a year later, by the decease of her father-in-law, her husband and herself ascended the throne of Prussia.

This alliance afforded extraordinary satisfaction to the Elector, who, having brought his negociations to a successful issue, could now turn his entire attention to his intrigues with the most powerful members of the party in England supporting a Protestant succession. Fortunately for him, he had been educated in the Protestant faith, though, as far as religion was concerned, his horse would have made as good a Protestant as himself. But in the dread of the English people for the re-establishment of popery, they were willing to overlook not less than *fifty-seven* branches of the royal

family, whose claims were superior to his own. Another fortunate circumstance for him was the support his pretensions obtained from the friendly William III., who paved the way for him as far as he was able, and when the throne to which the Elector aspired became his own, as the first step to such greatness, that King created him, on the 18th of June, 1701, a Knight of the Garter.

The lady to whom he had been an unsuccessful suitor, when she succeeded William III. in the sovereignty, seemed equally favourable to his ambitious views; for on the 9th of November, 1706, Queen Anne created him Baron of Tewkesbury, Viscount of Northallerton, Earl of Milford Haven, and Marquis and Duke of Cambridge, with precedency of all the peers of Great Britain—thus at once presenting him with every title of nobility in the gift of the crown. The houses of parliament were not less liberal; they passed enactments settling the succession in favour of his mother, which, on her demise, was to descend to himself. He had a powerful party in the country who strenuously upheld his claims; and with all loyal Protestants throughout the kingdom no theme was so popular as the blessings that were to be showered upon

the land as soon as it should come under the government of the Elector of Hanover.

The party for the Pretender, however, were very active, and spoke with such confidence of the countenance they received from Queen Anne, that the Elector became alarmed, and urged the Queen to allow himself or his son to reside in England, as the only effectual disclaimer of these rumours. His friends spoke of summoning Prince George to take his place in parliament as Duke of Cambridge. The journey of the Crown Prince was much talked of, and his visit was expected by his father's supporters in England; but the Queen was strongly opposed to such a proceeding,* and wrote her opinion of it in the following terms:—

* She had very good reason to be so, as may be seen in the following cotemporary report: "For the Whigs dispatcht a great many of their emissaries to ride about and engage their friends in all the neighbouring counties, and such places of the country as he was to pass through, to be in readiness to show their respect to the first Prince of the royal blood, when he arrived in Britain, by meeting and attending him to London; and they secured a great many reduc'd officers, who were to to be well accouterd in horses and arms, and offer themselves as a guard to his person; by which precautions, and the conjunction of their frieuds in London, they propos'd that the

"As the rumour increases that my cousin, the Electoral Prince, has resolved to come over to settle in my lifetime in my dominions, I do not choose to delay a moment to write to you about this, and to communicate to you my sentiments on a subject of this importance. I then freely own to you, that I cannot imagine that a Prince who possesses the knowledge and penetration of your Electoral Highness can ever contribute to such an attempt, and that I believe you are too just to allow that any infringement shall be made on my sovereignty which you would not choose should be made on your own. I am firmly persuaded that you would not suffer the smallest diminution in your authority. *I* am no less delicate in that respect; and I am determined to oppose a project so contrary to my royal authority, however fatal the consequences may be.

"Your Electoral Highness is too just to refuse to bear me witness, that I give, on all occasions, proofs of my desire that your family should suc-

Prince should pay his respects to the Queen at St. James's, attended with no less than forty or fifty thousand arm'd men, the consequences whereof it is very easy to imagine.—*The Lockhart Papers*, vol. i. p. 464.

ceed to my crowns, which I always recommend to my people as the most solid support of their religion and their laws. I employ all my attention, that nothing should efface those impressions from the hearts of my subjects; but it is not possible to derogate from the dignity and prerogatives of the Prince who wears the crown, without making a dangerous breach on the rights of the successors; therefore I doubt not but, with your usual wisdom, you will prevent the taking such a step, and that you will give me an opportunity of renewing to you assurances of the most sincere friendship, with which I am, &c."

The tone of this communication could not be mistaken. Affairs, too, in England by no means wore a favourable aspect. The Pretender, as he was called, had there numerous powerful friends both willing and able to do him good service, and at the head of these there were many reasons for suspecting the reigning sovereign, Queen Anne, either had placed, or was about to place, herself. Notwithstanding the expressions in the letter we have quoted, and the dignities she had conferred, she had never liked her Hanoverian kinsman as a suitor, she liked him less as a suc-

cessor, and was heard to speak of him with very little respect. It was exceedingly humiliating to the Elector, but to his aged mother it came with a terrible force. The heart and soul of the old lady were fixed upon one idea, which was her succession to the English throne. The excitement this occasioned entirely removed that apathy with which she had regarded her husband's mistresses, and she brooded over the letter of the Queen of England as though it were the death-blow to her aspirations. Molyneux, an agent of the Duke of Marlborough, was at this period at Hanover, and was proceeding to the country palace of the Elector, when he was startled by the intelligence that the venerable Electress was dying in one of the garden walks. What he observed is best narrated in his own words.

"I ran up there, and found her just expiring in the arms of the poor Electoral Princess,* and amidst the tears of a great many of her servants, who endeavoured in vain to help her. I can give you no account of her illness, but that I believe the chagrin of those villainous letters I sent you last post has been in a great measure the cause of

* Princess Caroline, subsequently Queen of George II.

it. The Rheingravine, who has been with her these fifteen years, has told me she never knew anything make so deep an impression on her as the affair of the Prince's journey, which I am sure she had to the last degree at heart, and she has done me the honour to tell me so twenty times. In the midst of this concern those letters arrived, and those I verily believe have broke her heart, and brought her with sorrow to the grave. The letters were delivered on Wednesday at noon.

" That when I came to court she was at cards, but was so full of these letters, that she got up and ordered me to follow her into the garden, where she gave them to me to read, and walked and spoke a great deal in relation to them. I believe she walked three hours that night. The next morning, which was Thursday, I heard she was out of order, and on going immediately to court, she ordered me to be called into her bedchamber. She gave me the letters I sent you to copy; she bid me send them next post, and bring them afterwards to her to court. This was on Friday. In the morning, on Friday, they told me she was very well, but seemed very chagrined. She was dressed, and dined with the Elector as

usual. About four she did me the honour to send me to town for some other copies of the same letters, and then she was still perfectly well. She worked and talked very heartily in the orangery. After that, about six, she went out to walk in the garden, and was still very well. A shower of rain came, and as she was walking pretty fast to get to shelter, they told her she walked a little too fast. She answered, 'I believe I do,' and dropped down on saying these words, which were her last. They raised her up, chafed her with spirits, tried to bleed her; but it was all in vain, and when I came up she was as dead as if she had been four days so."*

* Letter of Mr. Molyneux to the Duke of Marlborough.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE Dowager Electress Sophia died in her eighty-fourth year, on the 8th of June, 1714, in possession, almost to the last, of her good looks and her serenity of temper, which neither wrong nor insult could disturb. She was so intensely anxious to succeed to the English throne that she often said she should die happy could she only live to entitle her to have placed on her coffin, "Here lies Sophia, Queen of England." This wish might have been gratified had her life been prolonged fifty-three days; for the demise of Queen Anne took place on the 1st of the following August. But such was the state of travelling at this period, that the earliest messenger of the tidings, Mr. Secretary Craggs—though he made all the expedition in his power—was not able to present himself at the palace till the 27th of the

same month. The Elector had been proclaimed King of England in London, York, and other cities, without any opposition,* notwithstanding that a numerous phalanx were to be found in the country who sympathized in the misfortunes of the exiled Stuarts, and would have gladly promoted their recal.

King George, as we must now call him, did not take much time in making preparations for departing from his old sovereignty to enter upon his new one. With what thoughts he regarded his persecuted consort at the moment of his quitting the country in which she was a prisoner, we cannot state. Probably she scarcely entered

* This ceremony, as it occurred at York, is thus described: "I went this day to see the King proclaimed, which was done, the Archbishop walking next the Lord Mayor, and all the country gentlemen following, with greater crowds of people than I believed to be in York: vast acclamations, and the appearance of a general satisfaction: the Pretender afterwards dragged about the streets and burned, ringing of bells, bonfires and illuminations, the mob crying 'Liberty and property!' and 'Long live King George!' . . . All the Protestants here seem unanimous for the Hanover succession."—*Letter of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to her Husband.*

into his consideration beyond his giving some hasty commands for continuing her imprisonment more closely than ever; for, supposing she should escape and present herself in England, the story of her sufferings and her wrongs, he seemed to think, might produce effects on the people that could not but embarrass him in his government. He had reason to entertain some doubts of the legality of the divorce he had obtained; and were this arbitrary measure disputed in England she might, he well knew, insist on being allowed her position as queen, which would greatly incommode him, and be exceedingly distasteful to the tribe of mistresses he expected to accompany him to his new kingdom. Of creatures such as these there were many claimants who desired a conspicuous position in his suite. In the first place there was the daughter of the Countess Platen. The Crown Prince of Hanover, when he succeeded to his father's government, testified a proper respect for the parental authority by keeping on the establishment the most favoured of his father's ministers and mistresses. It is true, at the period of his accession to the English throne the Countess was no longer in office; her con-

science had begun to trouble her, and she felt uneasy in her mind with respect to the numerous offences against truth and honesty she had committed. Foremost in her crimes was her infamous conduct towards the innocent Princess Sophia Dorothea; and in the last years of her life, when her health had become undermined by a long course of profligacy, and the once beautiful favourite was a loathsome object to herself and to all who approached her, the evil she had committed rose in damning array against her soul, and made her life as miserable as it had been vicious. At last she sent for a clergyman, and eased her overburthened mind by making a full confession of her iniquities; among other crimes dwelling on her murder of Count Königsmark, and exonerating the Princess from all blame in her intimacy with him. This confession was wrung from a guilty conscience in the agonies of a death-bed. She died in the year 1706.

The Countess left one son and one daughter. Of the former we know very little. Of the latter, Sophia Charlotte, however, we are differently circumstanced. The Countess early brought her forward in that hotbed of vice in which she her-

self had flourished, and not without carefully impressing on her mind the necessity of her advancing her fortunes by the same means by which she had obtained both wealth and distinction. We have already alluded to her proffering the young lady to her own lover, by no means an extraordinary thing for the woman who had recommended her sister to fill the same infamous office with the son she occupied with the father; but her next display of indifference to the most ordinary feelings of decency was strange indeed, as strange as it was revolting. She had introduced her sister to the Crown Prince, she had done the same kind office for her friend Mademoiselle Schulenburg, and when the charms of both were fading, she showed one more act of devotion to the son of her liberal patron, by presenting the sated profligate with her own daughter.

These infamous transactions are almost incredible—nevertheless they are perfectly true. The Countess Platen's daughter became a favourite mistress of the Elector. She had dissipated the large fortune she had inherited from her mother in every species of extravagance, and after a hasty marriage with a M. Kielmansegge, to conceal her

profligacy, rivalled her mother in infamy. The Elector was getting tired of her excesses when, at the time he was about setting off for his English dominions, Madame Kielmansegge, who also took on herself the title of Countess Platen, put herself forward as so devoted to the person of her sovereign, she was ready to accompany him to that country, of which others of his mistresses stood in such dread, that they hesitated leaving their own beloved Hanover, to reside in such a place.

The King was pleased with her zeal, but there appeared to be an important obstacle in the way of her testifying it as readily as she wished. She had contrived to become overwhelmed with debt, and her creditors were far from desirous of losing sight of her. King George was not sufficiently pleased with her to offer to pay her debts, and she might have been forced to live in disgrace at home, had she not by a clever disguise given her creditors the slip, and found her way to Holland in time to embark for the English coast with the King, in whose favour she so quickly rose, that for some time she was the reigning sultana of his German seraglio.

Madame von Weyke, we believe, had retired from the Court before the Elector's accession to the English throne, but, like her sister, she had left there a daughter. This young lady was married to Lieutenant-General von Wendt. It is a most singular feature in courtly profligacy, that these two sisters should obtain an infamous notoriety, which each should have left to her own descendants, who were in every way worthy of succeeding to the family dishonours. But in the case of the younger sister it was the grand-daughter, instead of the daughter, who maintained the hereditary intrigue with the blood-royal—this third descendant becoming mistress of the son of her grandmother's lover and his repudiated consort—George Augustus Prince of Wales, subsequently George II. She may be better known to the reader by the title she subsequently obtained, of Countess of Yarmouth.

The most powerful of the King's German mistresses was, however, Mademoiselle Schulenburg—that apparently mild and gentle being who had blasted the happiness of the blameless Princess Sophia Dorothea so soon after her ill-starred nuptials She had had two children by the Elector, both

daughters; Petronelle Melusina, born in 1693; and Margaret Gertrude, born in 1703: and in consequence had acquired great influence over him. Mademoiselle Schulenburg had heard such terrible stories of the island that had become the chief possession of her royal lover, that she could not bring herself to offer to accompany him when he was proceeding there to obtain the crown so handsomely laid at his feet; but when she learned that a rival had usurped her place and authority, she forgot all her terrors, and transported herself as rapidly as possible into the English dominions; where she quickly resumed her influence over its weak and profligate sovereign.

With his female favourites the King brought over a tribe of the other sex, who were equally devoid of principle. They all rushed to England as an El Dorado, in which wealth and honours were to be had for the asking, or for the plundering. One of these was the traitorous minister of the late Duke of Zelle, now flourishing in triumphant crime with the title of Count Bernstorf. He was held in countenance by Baron Bothmar, Count Robethon, and some others of their countrymen. The estimable coterie was strengthened

by the presence of two Turks, named Mustapha and Mahomet, who, after having been taken prisoners whilst, as the Crown Prince, the King was serving in the imperial army, were induced to enter his service, in which they remained till they found themselves persons of considerable influence with the new monarch of Great Britain.

Nothing could equal the aspiring ambition of these worthies, save their avarice: and George the First degraded himself by suffering them to make use of his favour for the gratification of both qualities. Indeed, he showed a most shameless disregard of public opinion, by the manner in which he lent himself to the sordid views of this unprincipled crew. On his mistresses he lavished distinctions which had never before been so iniquitously disposed of. Mademoiselle Schulenburg was, in the year 1716, made a member of the Irish peerage, by being created Baroness of Dundalk, Countess and Marchioness of Dungannon, and Duchess of Munster. The disgrace thus inflicted upon the nobility of the sister kingdom was probably an experiment; for in the year 1719 the Irish peeress was raised to the dignity of peeress of England, with the further titles of

Baroness Glastonbury, Countess of Feversham, and Duchess of Kendal.

As we read this imposing array of titles, we may exclaim with Falstaff, "There's honour for you!" Nor can we help comparing the destiny of this worthless woman, thus raised to equality with the noblest in the land, and allowed to assume at Court the position of the consort of the sovereign, with that of the virtuous and noble-minded Princess, who, though under the greatest provocation, and in the midst of glaring licentiousness, remaining honourably observant of her duties as a wife and a mother, was degraded from the princely honours which were her undoubted birth-right, and banished at a period when life possesses the keenest zest for enjoyment, to an obscure fortress in her native land, to linger out her remaining years in what was only a little better than solitary imprisonment.

Madame Kielmansegge was also ennobled, though at rather a later date. On the death of her husband, in the year 1721, she was created Countess of Leinster in Ireland; and on the 10th of April of the following year Baroness of Brentford and Countess of Darlington. With these honours, it

is scarcely necessary to add that the members of this royal harem obtained ample means for supporting them. The King could lavish his English revenues upon such demireps—at the same time he was withholding from his discarded consort the common privilege of every human being guiltless of crime. Among the females of his seraglio who received distinctions, we must not forget his natural daughter Petronelle Melusina, the first child he had had by Mademoiselle Schulenburg. In the English court, she passed as the niece of the Duchess of Kendal. On the 10th of April, 1722, this young lady was created Baroness of Aldborough and Countess of Walsingham, and in consequence of her ostensible relationship to the King's mistress, and her presumed relationship to the King, she became a very important person in that depraved and degraded assembly called the Court of Great Britain, in the reign of the first George.

These harpies were far from being content with what the misplaced liberality of their sovereign allowed them. They were as corrupt as they were avaricious, and took bribes, and levied contributions for employing their interest in favour of applicants, with an industry that looked as if

they knew not how long their present good fortune might last, and that they were determined to grasp whatever came into their way whilst it might be in their power. They represented themselves as possessing more influence with the King than they knew they could exercise, and the whole tribe of courtiers, eager to bask in the royal sunshine, took care to conciliate them by costly presents and liberal donations. Even the two Turks —now raised to the dignity of pages of the backstairs—were allowed to drive a considerable trade, by trafficking in places of small emolument.

There were persons who acted as agents for these greedy parasites who disposed of state appointments, through their influence over the sovereign, for which they took care to obtain a proper consideration. Indeed their avarice appeared to be unbounded, and they seized on everything valuable with quite as little reference to propriety in the appropriation as to honesty.

The Duke of Somerset thought proper to resign his post of Master of the Horse. Scarcely was it known, before the Duchess of Kendal worried the King into bestowing its emoluments upon her. Another of the favourites grasped at the vacant

office of Master of the Buck Hounds as soon as it became vacant, and obtained it. We are not aware that these worthies fulfilled the duties of such offices; but there is no doubt that they obtained the salaries attached to them, which, after all, was what they desired. It is, perhaps, fortunate for the country that posts of greater responsibility did not, by requiring a possessor, excite the cupidity of the King's German mistresses, or else, perhaps, the plundered and degraded kingdom might have been still further disgraced by having the Countess of Darlington for Lord Chancellor, the Countess of Walsingham for Admiral of the Fleet, and the Duchess of Kendal for Archbishop of Canterbury.

It may be asked what sort of creatures were these, for whom George the First had discarded the virtuous and intellectual mother of his children? Of their character and dispositions the reader is sufficiently informed. Were they more lovely in person, more accomplished in mind, or more agreeable in manners, or more entertaining in conversation, than the poor captive who was wearing out her heart in uncared for lamentations over her intolerable imprisonment? There are

several cotemporary reminiscences of these worthies, that convey their portraits in a few graphic touches.

" Lady Darlington," says Horace Walpole, " whom I saw at my mother's in my infancy, and whom I remember by being terrified by her enormous figure, was as corpulent and ample as the Duchess of Kendal was long and emaciated. Two fierce black eyes, large and rolling beneath two lofty arched eyebrows; two acres of cheeks spread with crimson; an ocean of neck that overflowed, and was not distinguished from the lower part of her body; and no part restrained by stays—no wonder that a child dreaded such an ogress."

So unwieldy in bulk was this distinguished ornament of the Court of St. James's, that the wits of the day—and there were wits in those days—bestowed on her the cognomen of " The Elephant and Castle." From another valuable authority we have a delineation a little less repulsive. " She had a greater vivacity in conversation," observes Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, " than ever I knew in a German of either sex. She loved reading, and had a taste for all polite

learning. Her humour was easy and sociable. Her constitution inclined her to gallantry.* She was well-bred and amusing in company. She knew both how to please and be pleased, and had experience enough to know it was hard to do either without money. Her unlimited expenses had left her with very little remaining, and she made what haste she could to take advantage of the opinion the English had of her power with the King, by receiving the presents that were made her from all quarters; and which she knew very well must cease, when it was known that the King's idleness carried him to her lodgings, without either regard for her advice, or affection for her person, which time and very bad paint had left without any of the charms that once attracted him."

These lineaments are in some degree more favourable; but Lady Mary was likely to be indulgent in pourtraying such characters, perhaps knowing how much her own stood in need of similar liberality. Enough, however, is made out to prove that the Countess of Darlington was as ugly as she was depraved. Yet plain as she was

* A genteel way of expressing her noted want of chastity.

in features, her rival, the Duchess of Kendal, was still more unprepossessing. The once fair and gentle Mademoiselle Schulenburg had become a shrivelled anatomy—and the appellation of "The May-Pole," generally applied to her by the town wits, was, though too pleasant in its associations, from the height and spareness of that emblem of an obsolete sport, considered peculiarly happy.*

The licentiousness of royal courts had usually in it something of refinement and grace—this was peculiarly so in the Court of Louis XIV. The King of Poland, profligate as he was, did not allow his vices to become glaringly disgusting. Even the disreputable doings of our own Charles the Second, had some apology for the multitude, with whom personal attractions are usually re-

* Many mistakes have been made by English historians when alluding to the mistresses of George the First. In a recent publication, it is said, "The old lean mistress, the Duchess of Kendal, stood firm for Walpole, but Carteret had secured the younger and thinner mistress, Madame Kilmanseg, now Countess of Darlington, and her sister Madame Platen."—*Pictorial History of England*, vol. iv. p. 383. This "thinner mistress" was "the Elephant and Castle," and she had no sister.

garded as a natural provocation to libertinism. But George the First chose to display the foot of the satyr with an ostentation that proved his sensuality to be of the most gross and revolting character. This want of decency, coupled with such want of taste, made a powerful impression on the people of England.

"We are ruined by trulls," observed an anonymous writer; "nay, what is more vexatious, by old ugly trulls, such as could not find entertainment in the most hospitable hundreds of Old Drury."

Ugly as they were, they contrived to make pretty pickings, out of everything where a corrupt influence was possible. This was particularly manifest in that immense swindle the South Sea Bill, for furthering which the Duchess of Kendal received ten thousand pounds, the Countess of Darlington ten thousand pounds, and each of the Duchess of Kendal's daughters the same sum.

"No wonder that the mob of London were highly diverted at the importation of so uncommon a seraglio," says Horace Walpole. "They were food for all the venom of the Jacobites; and, indeed, nothing could be grosser than the

ribaldry that was vomited out in lampoons, libels, and every channel of abuse, against the sovereign and the new court. One of the German ladies being abused by the mob, was said to have put her head out of the coach, and cried in bad English, "Good people, why you abuse us? We come for all your goods!"

"Yes, and be d——d to you," answered a fellow in the crowd; "and for all our chattels too."

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Sophia Dorothea, weary of her imprisonment, amuses herself by writing a Diary illustrative of her own story—Her son the Prince of Wales—A sordid passion—Her daughter the Queen of Prussia—Account of her domestic misery by the Margravine of Bayreuth—The Duchess of Zelle endeavours to secure the settlement of her property on Sophia Dorothea—Death of the Duchess of Zelle—Efforts of the King of Prussia to obtain a knowledge of what property his Queen might inherit from her mother—Legal opinion of Thomasius—Communications between the Queen of Prussia and her mother—Memorandum from Sophia Dorothea authorizing the Count de Bar to sell her property in the Dutch funds—Supposed project of escape—Her pensioners in Holland—Another memorandum to the Count de Bar—Letter of Sophia Dorothea to the Count—Persons employed by her to communicate with her daughter—Report on their negociations with the Queen—Protest of Sophia Dorothea in favour of Count de Bar—She refuses the Queen's presents—Interesting letter of Sophia Dorothea—Her misplaced confidence in the Count de Bar—Her last letter to him—Treachery of the Count.

CHAPTER XIV.

TIME passed on with leaden wings to the royal captive at Ahlden. She had long exhausted all her resources for wiling away the heavy hours of her imprisonment. Her admirable charities for the poor, her excellent schemes for the industrious, her judicious rules for her own household, no longer afforded her occupation. She grew listless and weary. The hope deferred that maketh the heart sick, was making sad ravages in her once cheerful disposition, and she found herself obliged to be constantly employing her mind to keep off the despairing thoughts that weighed so heavily upon her spirit. Writing had always been her favourite occupation, and she had contrived even in her imprisonment to carry on a correspondence with three or four persons; and to continue a kind of diary of the conversations respecting her and her mother, that took place amongst the different mem-

bers of the courts of Hanover, Zelle, and Wolfenbüttel, who were in any way mixed up in the principal events of their lives. These conversations must have been partly composed from her recollections of such as she had herself shared in, and partly from such as were related to her by Mademoiselle Knesebeck, Count Königsmark, the Duchess of Zelle, and other persons in her confidence.

The reader, in going through her diary, which will be found in the second volume of this work, may probably feel surprised that it should have been written by the Princess, under the circumstances in which she was placed; but when the long period of her imprisonment is considered, and the facilities, even during this time, of obtaining intelligence which she possessed in the frequent visits of her mother, there will appear very little that is extraordinary in the fact of her having, thus circumstanced, compiled such a production. Many such works might have been written in half the time the Princess was detained at Ahlden. The minuteness of the information conveyed by the royal captive is not less remarkable than the dramatic manner in which it is narrated. The characteristic dialogues spoken by the various personages with whom

Sophia Dorothea came in contact convey a singular picture of the domestic manners of the minor sovereigns of Germany from a hundred to a hundred and fifty years ago.

This diary, with other important papers, were secretly transmitted by her, a short time before her death, to a friend in whom she could place the fullest confidence. Many of the scenes here described, in which the writer was the principal actor, possess all the appearance of trustworthiness, and read very like verbatim reports of actual occurrences from an eye-witness. It is very evident that, previously to her incarceration, Sophia Dorothea had made inquiries and collected memoranda respecting the proceedings of her father-in-law and the Platens both in regard to her mother and herself. She was in a position then to obtain such information, and she was too deeply interested in the subject not to have availed herself of it to the fullest extent.

A good deal of the time of the Princess must have been devoted to the composition of this novel species of diary, but as from *twenty* to *thirty years* had already been passed by her in imprisonment, there can be no doubt that she possessed sufficient leisure for completing it. It is true she

had other occupations, but so long a deprivation of liberty seemed so excessive a hardship, that they could not drive from her mind the sense of desolation that every day grew stronger upon her. Her commnnications with her mother, her daughter, and probably Mademoiselle Knesebeck, kept her aware of much that was going on in the world from which she had been so carefully shut out. But they brought her no consolation. She could learn nothing satisfactory of any member of her family. Her husband had earned the contempt of his new subjects, and the disgust of his old ones. Her son was treading in his steps, and had begun to display the same deficiency in moral and intellectual qualifications for which the Elector had rendered himself so conspicuous.

The Prince of Wales did not prove a better husband than his father had been. Besides other intrigues, he chose to amuse himself by pretending an attachment to his consort's maids of honour, to whom, on one occasion, it appears he thought, like Jupiter, of gaining his Danaë in a shower of gold; but he played the god in an exceedingly clumsy style. The beautiful Mary Bellenden was thus distinguished by him. "Miss Bellenden," says an agreeable gossip of those days, "by no

means felt a reciprocal passion. The Prince's gallantry was by no means delicate; and his avarice disgusted her. One evening, sitting by her, he took out his purse, and counted his money. He repeated the numeration: the giddy Bellenden lost her patience, and cried out, 'Sir, I cannot bear it: if you count your money any more, I will go out of the room.' The chink of the gold did not tempt her more than the person of his royal highness."

It is said the experiment was continued till the young maid of honour, losing her patience and respect at the same time, by a rapid movement of her foot, kicked up his guineas and sent them scattering in all directions. She hastily left the room, while his royal highness as hastily sprawled on the floor to recover the rejected bribe. The Prince, it is believed, was more successful in other instances, for he had many mistresses—the most celebrated being the Countesses of Yarmouth and Suffolk—of whom we shall have to speak presently. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the extent to which he degraded himself, by the manner in which he gave way to this hereditary vice, George Augustus was in many respects a better man than his father.

The Princess heard too of her daughter—very painful news for so affectionate a mother. The young Queen of Prussia possessed scarcely any prospect of happiness in the enjoyment of her regal grandeur. She had brought her consort two children, and when they came of an age to feel most acutely the improper manner in which they were treated, he behaved to them with a maniacal brutality.

" The tortures of purgatory," says his daughter, the Margravine of Bayreuth, " could not come up to what we endured. We were forced to be in his apartments by nine in the morning: we had our dinner there; and dared not leave it on any account. Nothing was to be heard all day but invectives against my brother and myself. The King never gave me any other name than *la canaille Anglaise*, and my brother *le coquin de Fritz*. He made us eat and drink things that we disliked, or which disagreed with us; so that sometimes we could not help vomiting before him all that we had in our stomachs."

In another place, the same writer states, " He first flung a plate at the head of my brother, who avoided the blow; then cast another at me, which I dodged in like manner. A torrent of abuse

followed these first hostilities." He subsequently made an attempt to knock his daughter's brains out with his crutch as she strove to pass his chair. A more disgusting trait is yet to be traced. "My brother and me were nearly starved by the King. He fulfilled the office of carver, and helped every body, excepting us two; and when it chanced that anything remained in one of the dishes, *he would spit upon it to prevent our eating it.*"

The poor prisoner at Ahlden, when she learned these revolting facts, must have entertained a doubt whether her fate was worse than that of her child. At the least, she must have known that her daughter and her grandchildren were in the hands of a man—if man he could be called—who appeared to possess as little feeling as sense. Such intelligence must have caused her great uneasiness. She took a warm and lively interest in her son and daughter, notwithstanding she had been parted from them for so many years, and a knowledge of the troubles of the young queen must have affected her as deeply as the news she had heard of the discreditable conduct of the Prince of Wales. Her grandson had of course been an object of considerable interest to her

since his birth. Little could she then have thought that the boy thus brutally treated, was to elevate himself from so rough a schooling, to become the most famous potentate in Europe. That boy a few years subsequently filled the world with his fame. He was then known by the name of *Frederic the Great.*

The Duchess of Zelle endeavoured to be as frequently with the Princess as her gaolers would allow, and strove earnestly to lighten her imprisonment as much as possible. As from her advanced age she knew not how soon the hand of death might put a stop to these visits, she became exceedingly anxious that while she possessed the power to befriend her daughter, she should do so, by securing for her whatever property she had to bequeath at her decease. It has been shown that she had already made the proper testamentary disposition in favour of the Princess, but she did not think that bequest sufficiently secure, and therefore had another document executed on the 21st of July 1721, and had it formally delivered to the high court of appeal at Zelle, four days subsequently.

The purport of it was that the Duke and

Duchess of Wolfenbüttel were to enjoy a life interest in forty thousand thalers, but of a loan of twenty-eight thousand thalers previously granted to the Duke, the Duchess of Ahlden was to receive the interest. It appears from the foregoing that the Duchess never forgot the seasonable friendship of the amiable Duke Anthony Ulrich. The remainder of the instrument merely stated that the Duchess of Zelle bequeathed to her daughter the estate at Olbreuse, and the mansion at Wienhausen, with the furniture, jewels and plate, as in her previous testament.

Mademoiselle Knesebeck distinctly states that after the death of the Duke of Zelle, the Duchess had to experience, by the hostile influence of her daughter's consort, annoyances not easily endured. Hers was naturally a cheerful and happy disposition; but the sight of the Princess's sufferings, and the disappointments she experienced in her various efforts to relieve them, produced a deep effect on her mind. She bore up against it as long as she could, but in advanced age the defences against shocks of this kind are feeble, and consequently are quickly levelled. The Duchess grew weaker soon after completing the document we

have just mentioned, and it became evident that she was approaching that bourne "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." Her last journey to the prison where for twenty-eight years her only child had been immured for no fault, unless her worth and virtue must be regarded as such, was attended with many painful reflections, and after a saddening interview she gave the unhappy Princess her blessing, and came away fully impressed with the conviction that they should meet again only where the power of the tyrant could never reach them. On her return to her residence, the Duchess took to her bed, and died on the 25th of February, 1722.

This was the heaviest blow the poor Princess had yet received. Her fond mother, her faithful intercessor, her affectionate adviser, her consoler, comforter, and sole friend on earth, had been snatched away from her for ever, and she seemed now totally abandoned by every friend and relative, to die uncared for in the gloomy fortress that must soon be her tomb. Everything appeared to press heavily upon a spirit already overburthened. Her communications with the Queen of Prussia could only be continued through the agency of

persons who, she found out too late, were the paid spies of her relentless tyrant. One individual at this time particularly recommended himself to her confidence. He was the Count de Bar, a nobleman who had previously been distinguished by the confidence of her father.

We are willing to believe that the Queen of Prussia would, under happier circumstances, have taken a bold stand against the enemies of her mother, and used her best exertions to procure her that liberty of which for so long a period she had been deprived; but power she had none, and in her own domestic relations she experienced no ordinary suffering. The King of Prussia, though he had shown himself so unfeelingly indifferent to the wrongs inflicted on the mother of his consort, and was perfectly careless as to what became of *her*, felt very differently as to what became of her fortune. He learned that the despised prisoner enjoyed property to a considerable amount, which his queen, her daughter, was likely to inherit at her death. She was in receipt of an income of eighteen thousand thalers from different possessions, besides the interest of large funds left her by her parents that amounted to ten thousand thalers more. The Prussian monarch had given instructions

to his resident in London to inquire of the Prince of Wales the easiest way for his master to get possession of this inheritance, as his Majesty appeared inclined to seize it not only before it came into the possession of his consort, but before the Duchess of Zelle had given up her portion of it.

As the agent did not succeed in obtaining any satisfactory information on this interesting point, a M. Wallenrodt was dispatched as the King's envoy to gain from the Prince the information so much desired. The question of the inheritance was duly made, and the envoy no doubt, equally with his employer, must have been much surprised at the reply he was obliged to send; for it stated "that it was first to be decided whether the daughter of the Duchess of Ahlden could inherit at all, in which case she would possess everything; and that he had received a decisive answer from the Prince of Wales." After the demise of the Duchess of Zelle, the question seemed to assume a deeper interest, and the famous lawyer, Thomasius, then resident at Halle, was desired by the King to give a judicial opinion respecting this disputed right of inheritance.

Mr. Counsellor Thomasius received a large collection of papers, from which it was expected he

would form his opinion, which he was to give in reply to the following queries:

1. What property came to the Duchess of Zelle on the death of her husband.

2. In what manner this should devolve to her posterity.

3. What property the Duchess of Ahlden had brought her husband at her marriage with the King of England, and the settlements that had been made respecting it.

4. In what way the houses of Zelle and Hanover had arranged the settlement of property after the dissolution of the marriage.

These were the principal points, from which the counsellor was to discover what possessions the Queen of Prussia and her heirs might lay claim to —what had been left by the Duchess of Zelle— what might be left by the Duchess of Ahlden —the claims of the latter on her husband— what the Duchess inherited from her mother, and what portion might be claimed by the Queen of the property the Duchess of Ahlden had brought at her union with the King of England.

We can here only state that the result of the

learned counsellor's deliberations was so far satisfactory to the King of Prussia as to entertain him with the idea that he might look forward to possess at least half the property the Duchess of Ahlden should die possessed of, as his Queen must then share equally with her brother, the Prince of Wales. It does not appear that his Majesty, after receiving this opinion, exhibited the slightest act of kindness towards the relative from whom he had such expectations: indeed, evidence exists to prove that he exercised all the influence he possessed to prevent any communication between his consort and his mother-in-law.

Nevertheless, they managed to carry on a correspondence, the Queen trusting to a faithful attendant of her own, called Frederick, and her mother placing the same confidence in a person named Ludeman, who held one of the most responsible offices in the household at Ahlden. The Count de Bar had become suspected, and the Queen would not hear of his being further employed. It is very clear, from the papers that have been preserved, that the Queen of Prussia was in great alarm during the continuance of this correspondence, lest it should be discovered; and

this was never more apparent than when the royal family of Prussia, in the year 1725, went to Hanover to meet George I., who was then on a visit to his electorate, to which there cannot be a doubt he was much more attached than he was to his kingdom.

We cannot altogether approve of the conduct of the Queen of Prussia towards her unfortunate mother. Frederick William was undoubtedly a domestic tyrant, every way qualified to become the son-in-law of so brutal a despot as George Lewis. Although willing to take into consideration her fear of offending such men as her father and her husband, we should have been better pleased were anything like evidence to be found that she sought to ameliorate the hard lot of her unhappy mother. Notwithstanding all considerations that may be made for her peculiar position, it is impossible to dwell on the protracted imprisonment of the Princess Sophia Dorothea, without receiving an impression of disappointment that her daughter, when approaching the neighbourhood of her jail, should not have made some effort to behold the author of her being.

We have mentioned the name of the Count de

Bar. It is evident that Sophia Dorothea placed the most implicit confidence in this person. We here insert a memorandum from the Princess's papers, authorizing the Count to sell out from the Dutch funds to a large amount. Whilst this paper affords curious evidence of the writer being a woman of business, it appears very probable that she had some object in view in procuring such a sum of money, which there can be but little doubt was intended to furnish the means of escaping out of the country. One cannot help suspecting that the Count de Bar was privy to this. He had gained her favourable opinion, perhaps by such attentions as are acknowledged in the last paragraph, which affords evidence of a custom then very common amongst the ladies of the highest rank all over the continent.

MEMORANDUM.

"As I consent most willingly that M. le Comte de Bar should sell my Dutch bonds at a reasonable price, requesting him to acquaint me with the current price, to the amount of thirty and odd thousand crowns, securing to me the rest of the said bonds, the bailiff Ludeman will send them to him.

Seventeen of them are on the *comptoir* of the Hague, amounting to sixty-one thousand eight hundred and forty florins; and sixteen bonds on the *comptoir* of Amsterdam, making the sum of sixty-three thousand three hundred and twenty-three florins, seventeen sols; and I think it necessary that the Count de Bar should put with his own hand in the three or four intervals of his bond the amount which he shall take, and send it by H.* to the bailiff Ludeman, who has reported to me upon other things which have been entrusted to him, concerning which I have had much satisfaction, and the happy issue of which will afford me still more. I desire the most gracious compliments possible to be given to the Count de Bar, together with my thanks for the snuff with which he has presented me, which is very good, but the quantity too great.

"SOPHIE DOROTHEA.

"Ahlden, September 25th, 1724."

Sophia Dorothea employed the funds at her disposal in affording relief, and even competence,

* A person of the name of Heising, employed by the Princess in her communications with the Count.

to a vast number of very worthy persons. The recipients of her bounty were not confined to Germany, as may be seen in the following note:

"List of the pensions which I wish to be paid in Holland.

AT HARLEM.

Money of Holland.

To the whole Society of Harlem . 400 crowns.
To Mdlle. de Passac in particular . 40 crowns.

AT THE HAGUE.

To Mdlle. de Martel , . 300 crowns.

AT UTRECHT.

To Mdlle. de Tors .. . 50 crowns.

AT LEUWARDEN.

To Mdlle. la Venfue de Chauffepied 50 crowns.
To Mdlle. de Ville Venfue . 50 crowns.

Making, in the whole, the sum of eight hundred and ninety crowns, or two thousand two hundred and twenty-five florins of Holland.

"SOPHIE DOROTHEA.

"Ahlden, the 25th September, 1724."

The following year we meet with a similar

list. The memorandum that follows strengthens the suspicion that more was meant in these sales than meets the eye.

" After having maturely considered the circumstances, and the high price of Dutch bonds at present, according to the information which M. le Count de Bar has given to the bailiff Ludeman, by letter of the 14th instant, those on the *comptoir* of the Hague being at par, that is to say, one hundred for one hundred, and those on the *comptoir* of Amsterdam, one with another, at one hundred and nine for one hundred, according as purchasers are to be met with, I have determined to sell all the bonds I have on the two *comptoirs* of the Hague and of Amsterdam, since this price appears to me so high and so profitable that there is no appearance it will rise any higher, but, on the contrary, it is to be feared that it may fall considerably. I therefore order the bailiff Ludeman to send to Holland, to M. le Comte de Bar, the six letters of attorney signed by my hand, which he will need for effecting the sale of my said bonds. I wish also that the money arising from them over and above the thirty thousand

crowns which I have already disposed of, to be placed in safe keeping, till I find opportunity to put it out profitably to interest, and, if this could be done, with safety, in such a manner that at any time, whether in peace or war, I may always have my money at my disposal without fail. While waiting for this opportunity of placing it, I am satisfied that it should be put in the bank of Amsterdam, for the necessary precaution and assurance.

"SOPHIE DOROTHEA.

"Ahlden, October 27th, 1724."

Should the unhappy prisoner succeed in effecting her escape from the dominions of the Elector, such a sum as that she names would be of essential service to her; and the manner in which she was selling out of the Dutch funds all she possessed there, and placing the amount in the bank of Amsterdam, where she might readily avail herself of it on her arrival, favours the impression that she was planning a secret flight from her prison, which the Count de Bar was to assist.

We next produce a communication from the Princess to the Count, though ostensibly proceed-

ing from another party. It contains her erasures, alterations, and remarks in the margin.

"To M. le Comte de Bar.

"As your Excellency had assured me positively by your letter of the 16th of July, that you would wait at Brunswick for my answer on the two points proposed and contained in your letters of the 15th and 16th instant, I hastened as much as possible that I might not delay your Excellency too long, and as the person you know (whom I do not name for certain reasons) delivered to me immediately[a] a paper in *her** own handwriting, containing *her* sentiments on the points proposed with order[b] to communicate it to your Excellency

[a] on the following day.

[b] Commission had better be put in-

* In the original the sex of the writer is disguised.

stead of *order*, as it does not appear to come from a superior, while that is implied by the other.

by an express whom I was to instruct not to deliver the letter to any one but yourself, and to bring it back in case he should not meet with your Excellency, since it was out of season to trust such a letter to the post; I must confess that my surprise was extreme when

'giving me back my letter.

my express returned and ' brought me the vexatious news that your Excellency had left Bruns. for B.* the morning of the same day on which he arrived towards evening. I am exceedingly mortified at this; and there must have been certain circumstances and very strong reasons to induce your Excellency to change your design and to hasten your journey so much, without

* Most probably Berlin.

apprising me of it by an express, for the honour of your letter of the 20th did not reach till the 24th, after the return of my messenger.

"As, however, I consider it absolutely necessary that your Excellency should be informed at least of some part of the sentiments of the said person, I will tell you as briefly as possible that this person has been extremely surprised because objections were made on the last point* proposed with the person you know, and that it was even considered as an advantageous affair in regard to the present state, [of things] that you were entirely master of all your

* "The words "to the marriage" are here struck out by the Princess, and "the last point" inserted.

I think one ought to avoid the word *marriage*, which might afford too much light if the letter were to fall into suspicious hands, and to make use of the words affair, point, or article, contained in the letter of the 16th.

[c] for the remainder of life.

actions, and that you could "act"* according to your own choice without caring about *her* sentiments, yet since you wished to be informed of them, *she* declared with the utmost sincerity that the alliance for which you appear to have but too much inclination could not be otherwise than very odious to *her*,† &c. *Without touching upon an infinity of other reasons alleged, she* put the question, if, supposing that the $\frac{m}{60}$‡ were really and perfectly secured,[c] which nevertheless appears very doubtful, they could counterbalance the rest? Besides, one could not reckon upon so disgrace-

* The word "marry" struck out.

† Apparently a reference to a proposed marriage of her daughter's children.

‡ A cypher, most probably £60,000.

ful a step producing any benefit.[d]

She repeats that your Excellency is absolute master to do what you please, but that it was impossible for *her* ever to give *her* approbation to an "affair"* which would indubitably separate *her* daughter from *her* interests, and the consequences of which speak but too plainly for themselves. As for the general amnesty which your Excellency deems absolutely necessary, I informed you last year what was thought on that subject. This person merely adds that *she* had christian sentiments, that *she* was neither implacable nor animated with an unworthy desire of vengeance,

[d] This person thanks God that all those things in the world which are most liable to dazzle are not capable of exciting in *her* the slightest movement of temptation, or making the least impression upon *her*, or leading *her* into any meanness.

* "Marriage" is struck out here.

far from wishing anything harsh and still less cruel: but that it would be very mortifying to *her* to find *herself* disappointed of all satisfaction after so many outrages and offences,[e] which cannot be considered as a criminal revenge, but rather as a point of honour conformable to the Holy Scriptures and the example of St. Paul.—See the Acts of the Apostles, c. 16, v. 36, 37.

[e] and insults.

"The said person also expresses astonishment that since the affair in question was broached one has never made such reflections accompanied by the scruples now resulting from them; that *she* was curious to learn the origin of it, which occupied *her* mind and with

which *she* was touched; that *she was* resigned[f] to divine Providence.[g] As these points are extracted from the said paper of the 19th containing the sentiments on the proper points, your Excellency will judge of the rest, and I shall reserve the original for you.[h]

"I am delighted that the attestation has arrived safe; I do not imagine that the buyers will make any scruples respecting the maternal dispositions, or will pretend to see them. I have the honour to be, with great respect,

"S. D."

[f] in all things.

[g] which alone gives *her* strength to support, &c.

[h] which I should be glad to transmit to you by a safe channel.

This curious and interesting document bears the date of the 28th of July, 1725. It shows that an imprisonment of upwards of thirty years was far from having crushed the spirit which had

led Sophia Dorothea to choose humiliation and loss of liberty, in preference to retaining her position at court subject to the insults of a bevy of wantons. The allusion to the "general amnesty" appears to refer to some overtures of reconciliation, either from the King of England or the King of Prussia.

The parties employed by the Princess in carrying on her communications with the Queen of Prussia were—Ludewig, a privy councillor at Berlin; Frederick, an attendant on the Queen; and Ludemann, who held the office of bailiff or *Amtmann* at Ahlden. It appears, from a paper of instructions drawn up by the privy counsellor, for Frederick, who was to communicate with the bailiff, that affairs were in so bad a state, it was impossible to take any steps without making bad worse, and causing more unhappiness; but that time and Providence would ameliorate everything. We find here the first intimation that the Queen desires that the Count de Bar is not to return to Berlin, because her Majesty did not like him, and she thought he would cause the affair to miscarry.

We next come to a long report by Ludemann,

of his interview with Frederick: as the latter was ambassador from the daughter to the mother, what passed must be considered of sufficient interest to find a place here.

He says, "The Queen sends her best regards to her highness, with the strongest assurances of her entire affection, respect and filial devotion, soliciting to maintain a place in the affections of her mother, for whom she forwards some presents. She would with pleasure have written, but the circumstances in which she is placed render it too hazardous. The least movement in her highness's favour could not be made without great danger. That the King of Prussia had set his mind on the two marriages,* as being greatly to the welfare of his family, though there were many difficulties, and much management required in their arrangement."

Much stress is laid on the necessity of refraining from stirring in the cause of the Princess whilst there was a fear existing of any interference with the King's matrimonial views; consequently that Ludewig was not to attempt any communi-

* The proposed marriages of Sophia Dorothea's grandson and granddaughter of the royal family of Prussia.

cation—that no presents were to be sent—that Frederick was not to meet any one, and that Ludemann was not to go near him; and that Count de Bar was no more to be employed, as the Queen thought him a traitor, engaging in the affair only with a view to his own interests, and that all he had stated to the Princess was sheer invention.

The bailiff remarks on this denunciation of the Count as very strange, considering how faithfully he had served the Princess, and for how many years previously he had served her father. He could not comprehend why the Count should be in such discredit with the Queen of Prussia, and desired something in writing corroborative of this opinion; but Frederick had nothing of the kind to give. At last he gave the privy counsellor's instructions on that point. In the end the Queen is made to promise her mother, if she will keep herself quiet till these marriages are completed, to do everything in her power to serve her, but particularly cautions her against allowing anything to escape, which might be made use of to her prejudice.

Against her daughter's ill opinion of her counsel-

lor, Sophia Dorothea makes the following protest. The original is in her own hand-writing.

" MEMORANDUM.

" In case there should be repeated at Hanover what has been said at Rhéburg, concerning M. le Comte de Bar, I declare that my firm and constant will is, that the Count de Bar shall continue to act for me and my affairs, as he has always done hitherto. I ought not, and I will not prevent those whom Heaven in its infinite mercy has been pleased to raise up to have compassion on me, from acting in my favour, and for my interest. In future, however, he shall not annoy anybody in Berlin.

" SOPHIE DOROTHEA.

" Ahlden, September, 5th, 1725.

" The original of this was added to my very humble remonstrance sent to the King, under the address of the private secretary of the cabinet, the Sieur Meyer, on the 20th of June, 1725."

With the report of the interview with Frede-

rick, the Princess was greatly dissatisfied. She was not so strongly impressed with the necessity of her refraining from all attempts to communicate with her daughter, as her daughter seemed to be. The following memorandum, acknowledging the presents, speaks the spirit in which she received them.

"I have received two portraits in miniature set in gold, a gold repeater watch garnished with cornelian, with chain, seal, and gold hook; an etui of mother-o'-pearl with gold, garnished in like manner; and a snuff-box covered with a rare agate, which I keep till they can be returned with safety, it being neither just nor proper that I should accept them in the present conjunctures and circumstances—excepting the two portraits which I retain.

"SOPHIE DOROTHEA.

"Ahlden, August 26th, 1725."

Some further communications passed between the subordinate agents, but they contain nothing very important. The Princess was perfectly dissatisfied, and did not believe in the authenticity of the documents submitted to her, and the agents en-

deavoured to prove their genuineness. In the following month Sophia Dorothea wrote more at length, evidently addressing the Count de Bar.

"September 27th, 1725.*

"Notwithstanding the impatience to express the infinite joy and consolation caused by the answer, I have not ventured to send back the express so speedily, lest too frequent journeys should excite suspicions in the dragons, the harpies, by whom I am surrounded. I think I may do so now, and I begin with saying that the assurances and the expressions which you have been pleased to employ, have restored tranquillity to my mind. I shall make use of the same terms, which I hope you will recollect, and apply them to myself, and if it is possible to go beyond them, rely upon it that it shall be done, and that words cannot express all that I think, that I have always thought, without the least diminution, and what I shall never cease to think till my last breath. In the name of God be always the same, as I shall be on my part, till my latest breath.

* Wherever *I* occurs in this paper, with the exception of the last two pages, the original has the indefinite *l'on*.

"I have no desire to know the plan, trusting to you with the most perfect confidence to do all that you think fit.

"The proposal of marriage was forgiven at once; forgive too if it drew forth too hasty remarks. Notwithstanding appearances, I have always taken your part, and never could persuade myself that inclination urged you to an alliance so unworthy of you. I have always strongly believed that the mischievous intrigues of bitter enemies gave rise to it.

"The resolution taken with so much presence of mind to go to Han. is an inspiration from heaven. The gratitude with which I am filled equals that which I owe to you, that is to say, it is infinite.

"As the desired use was made of your letter,* I cannot answer it but from memory, and therefore am fearful that some article may escape, which I earnestly request you to have the goodness to excuse.

"I have long had violent suspicions respecting

* A communication from the Count, evidently destroyed at his request, as soon as read.

Lud.,† but the treachery is now clear. He had been ordered to send the paper of the 19th of July, and the extract which he was to make from that of the 28th, with the letter that he was to write to you by express. This rascal allowed it to be read: it is there distinctly mentioned that those two papers were annexed, and your sentiments respecting the manner of remitting hither the proceeds of the sale of the bonds were asked by way of order. When he showed your answer, I expressed surprise that no mention was made of the two papers in question; upon which he replied that it was no doubt from forgetfulness that you had passed them over in silence, that you had sent them both back, and he afterwards returned them. It is evident that he sent off a totally different letter from that which was seen and approved.

"I had great difficulty to repress the just indignation which I felt at the villany of this

* It may perhaps seem doubtful whether this abbreviation is intended for Ludemann, the bailiff, or his brother-in-law Ludewig, the privy councillor. Both, however, were in the same plot against her. But Ludemann is here alluded to.

wretch; and I had need to call to mind your wish that no notice should be taken of it yet. Many things must have passed at Han., since he could so far get the better of himself as to show your letter of the 7th of this month, which declares him so manifestly what he is, unless the delicate manner in which it is turned prevented him from discovering it. I could not resolve to inform you in my last of all that I knew about B.* being so vexed and so indignant, because you spare the same movements; but there now appears to be a most urgent necessity for acquainting you with all the details; I therefore annex to this the pretended instructions of Ludewig to Friderich, and the memorandum which Lud. made of his conversation with the latter, for your better information. I wished to keep these two originals, but the repeated solicitations of Lud., supported by the reasons contained in these two papers, caused me to think that I ought to return them after copying them myself with exact fidelity. The extreme dissatisfaction which they excite made me think proper not to keep the pre-

* It is not quite clear who is meant by this initial: the sentence, too, is not quite intelligible.

sents which l. r. de p.* sent, which are marked in the receipt which will be found with the other papers annexed, and which have been carried back to Han. by Lud., to whom Friderich was to deliver them at Rhébourg. I apprehend that they have not been pilfered, and should be very glad to be out of this doubt, and to have it cleared up above all things, if you find it practicable, for I leave the matter entirely to you. I have thought it right to send back the presents that l. r. d. p. (the Queen of Prussia) might thereby know that I was much displeased with what was said in my name.

" The memorandum, declaring my determination in regard to M. le Comte de Bar was, by way of reply to the impertinent things said about him, and was to be delivered by his own hand to l. r. (the Queen,) with the receipt and the presents by Friderich. These papers have been brought back by Ludeman, and a memorandum in his hand-writing, which he says he copied from the original written by the hand of l. r. (the Queen,) which is hereto annexed, but which, I am persuaded, is a fabrica-

* So in original, an abbreviation of la Reine de Prusse, her daughter.

tion, and which, I think, is useful to keep. All that they have pleased to let me know is contained in the two memorandums in [her] own hand, inclosed herewith. I know not if the 5 $\frac{un}{2}$ * has been, and if Lud. has dared to advance anything more, as it is strongly denied. I am of opinion, that the whole of this black business has been got up by the clique here, for reasons and ends easy to be perceived. This affair has produced very deep and very poignant chagrin, by exposing the whole extent of the deplorable and dangerous condition, in which one is, and which is constantly getting worse and worse, seeing one's-self surrounded more and more by people without faith or justice, and whose number is daily increasing, incessantly exposed to all the calumnies, false suppositions, and ill turns of all kinds which they are pleased to do, having it in their power more than ever to invent the words and the actions which they attribute to me, and by which they strive to blacken my reputation: Ludeman, who was the only channel through which one could ever learn

* Unintelligible—possibly meant as a cypher for the King of Prussia—the writer intending to say that she was ignorant of the King having made any inquiries.

anything, and make known the truth, being at present absolutely devoted to them.

"If one apprehended poison several years ago, the circumstances in which one is now placed are such as to strengthen that fear, and as life is not at this present time indifferent, this idea, added to all the rest, would be very capable of disturbing one's tranquillity if the almighty grace of God did not preserve it in the heart, in spite of all storms, and did not bestow increased strength and courage in proportion to the greater need that one has of them. One may say that one never had more of them than now, and you may rely upon it with entire certainty, that by the aid of that divine grace, nothing on earth, without any exception, can induce a change of sentiments or conduct, or lead to any action in the slightest degree mean and unworthy, but that one will resolutely and stedfastly adhere to that which one has held fast for so many years, without having ever made the smallest change in it. Glory and what one owes to one's self inviolably demand it, and all imaginable reasons strongly strengthen me in this principle.

"The health is good and better than might be

expected in the agitated state in which one continually is. The God of mercy supports one in a manner that may be called marvellous, and one takes care of one's self, since friends have the kindness to interest themselves in one's welfare. The strong expressions made use of in the preceding, on this subject, were meant to convey an idea of the excess of the annoyance that one is receiving from all sides, and that excite a horrible disgust for the country one lives in, and an ardent desire to leave it.

" One has not yet seen the accounts of the Bailiwick's since the year 1721; one does not know whether to urge for them now or not: one finds inconveniences in both. One is justly mistrustful of one's skill in such matters, and is not fond of signing things, about which one does not see clearly, and which one might have to repent of. On the other hand, one has experienced that the longer such affairs are in hand, the more blunders are committed, to say nothing more. Your opinion is desired, and shall be followed to the letter. This will cost but two words, for as the express cannot come back directly, a note will suffice merely to certify the receipt of all

that shall be delivered, and a few words more if you think fit, but which cannot be understood by any but the person for whom they shall be destined.

" Your letter of the 18th and the postscript, were communicated on Monday last; they have given great, great pleasure.

" Thus far was written when one received the letter from Ludeman, which shall accompany this, with the postscript, which he says he wrote to Friderich, and the answer of the latter. The pretended memorandum of the R. is very like her writing, and the same, word for word, as the copy; but I cannot believe that it is so, and I take it to be imitated and counterfeited, since, according to Ludeman, she would not entrust it to him to bring hither, and for this reason he was obliged to make a copy of it. Besides, I cannot see why she should have kept it eleven or twelve days after Ludeman's departure, and why she should have changed her mind in so short a time, and suffered it to pass through so many strange hands; I am resolved to keep it, and not to send it back, as Ludeman has so urgently desired. In case it might be necessary for you, let me know by the

express. As I do not consider it so, Ludeman's copy answering the same purpose, I have not sent it to you, but shall keep it to make use of upon occasion.

" It is, I think, superfluous to say that the sight of the infamous Ludeman is intolerable; that speaks for itself.

" Accept the confirmations and reiterations of esteem and gratitude—which surpass all that can be imagined and thought—with as much satisfaction as they are given to you with the most eminent and perfect truth.

" S. D."

It is evident that the poor prisoner placed implicit confidence in the faith of her correspondent, notwithstanding she thought so ill of her more subordinate agent Ludeman; but the clutch of the drowning man at a straw is not more desperate than was the grasp with which the Princess held on to the hope of liberation, that arose out of her confidence in this man's integrity. For a year longer she kept deluding herself with a prospect of escape, employing herself as much as possible in doing the poor people

around her all the good in her power. Her heart was sick of the perfidy with which she was surrounded. She saw her own dependants apparently deeply interested in her unhappy position, but only assuming this sympathy that they might recommend themselves to her confidence, the more effectually to betray her secrets. She seemed to breathe an atmosphere of espionage and treachery. She was growing old and feeble, and the heart that had stood so extraordinary a test was fast losing that high courage which had led her to dare so much. It is not strange that she should have clung with such tenacity to her confidence in the Count de Bar.

In the following letter, which is the last of those written by Sophia Dorothea at this period, she expresses herself more warmly in his favour than ever:

"Ahlden, August 3rd, 1726.

"If it had been in my power, Sir, to answer at the same moment that which was faithfully delivered to me on the 20th of December, last year, I would not have delayed till now. Words can but faintly express all that I have felt. I should

have millions of things to reply and to tell you. I reserve them till I next see you: Heaven grant that it may be soon. I wait and wish for that happy day with an anxiety that deprives me of rest. Come, Sir, I conjure you. You know to what point you are necessary to me, and on all imaginable accounts; but come in a manner that will leave us nothing to fear from the unheard of injustice and fury of my enemies.

"Be perfectly assured of an esteem that increases every moment of my life, as well as my gratitude. Both are of such high degree that they are unbounded: and to say all in one word, they are proportionate to what you deserve, and above all that ever was in the world and that ever will be.

"SOPHIE DOROTHEA.

"In case a paper should be necessary to produce to the public, have the goodness, Sir, to send me one. I am fearful that I should not do it in proper form.

"This letter was written, and only waiting an opportunity for being dispatched. I add that the note of the 13th was delivered to me on the 17th. I must confess that what is come from

beyond sea occupies my mind. God grant that there may be no obstacle to delay what I have at heart more than I can express. You are not ignorant, Sir, what that is; all my sentiments being known to you as to myself. I fancy myself becoming the monster losing its sight; but I have not talked about it. I doubt whether in exchange Heaven will be pleased to open certain eyes. I am entirely ignorant of what is passing in the world, excepting what the political news unfolds. I am guarded, and more pains than ever are taken to prevent me from learning anything. Heising will deliver this letter to you. I believe him to be very faithful, and he can bring me back that in question. Say to yourself, Sir, all that imagination can conceive most gracious, and you will never say enough.

"SOPHIE DOROTHEA.

"August 19th, 1726, three o'clock in the morning."

The allusion of the unhappy Princess to a paper to be produced to the public looks as if on effecting her escape she intended publishing an appeal to the world for justice against those who had so infamously wronged her. It is impossible

to read the eloquent expressions of the poor captive's gratitude to her supposed friend without feeling the deepest disgust for his well-acted hypocrisy.

Count de Bar got possession of the large sum of money that had been entrusted to him. He paid the trifling legacies Sophia Dorothea had mentioned, but the very considerable surplus he chose to retain, nor could a suit at law, which was subsequently brought against him for its recovery, make him restore his plunder.

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CHAPTER XV.

In the meantime the despotic husband of the royal captive reigned over his new kingdom like an eastern Pacha, who looks upon his government only as a source of revenue for himself and his dependents. A complete Turkish system of spoliation distinguished the reign of George I. His Hanoverian favourites hung on the country like leeches, and still their cry was "Give, give!" Their impudent robberies, and reckless extravagance, disgusted every one but their employer, who seemed to consider that everything in England should be subject to Hanoverian rapacity.

A countryman of his, who filled a high station in the royal kitchen, requested leave to return to the Electorate, excusing himself from remaining any longer in his master's service, in consequence

of the reckless waste and inordinate plunder he was daily in the habit of witnessing when engaged in his culinary operations.

"Never mind," replied the monarch, "I am now rich enough to bear the expense. Do you steal like the rest; and," he added, with a chuckle of satisfaction, "be sure you take enough."

In fact, George I. had no honesty, nor did he give any one around him the credit of possessing such a quality. To the remonstrances of Sir Robert Walpole against the open and scandalous sale of places and dignities by his German favourites, he insultingly replied, "I suppose *you* are also paid for your recommendations."

We cannot wonder, with such a sovereign, that a rebellion should have displayed itself with the object of restoring the exiled Stuarts; and though he succeeded in crushing it, the ferocity with which he punished several of the unfortunate adherents of his rival who fell into his power, did anything rather than render more favourable the opinion the majority of his subjects entertained of him.

Notwithstanding the wealth he had found and squandered in his new kingdom, and the appa-

rently inexhaustible nature of its resources, he took no pains to conceal from his subjects that his poor electorate was a thousand times more dear to his heart. It seemed as though Great Britain was regarded by him more in the light of a temporary possession, which was to be made to give up all its treasures, and then abandoned to the next comer, whilst Hanover was the home to which he might retire when necessary, for the purpose of enjoying at his leisure the gains he had squeezed out of his kingdom.

He placed as little confidence as possible in the English attendants and ministry he found himself obliged to employ. He would allow none of them to enter his chamber when he retired for the night, or when he rose in the morning. In signing a treaty, or making a declaration of war, he seemed to care only for his beloved Hanover; and however pressing might be the necessity of his remaining in his kingdom, he would not delay a moment when he felt desirous of visiting his electorate.

The revenues of Hanover were small, and he had been used to keep pretty well within their bounds; but although those he derived from his

new government were so very much larger, he had made such an improvident use of them, that in the year 1725 he called upon parliament to defray the debts of the civil list, which amounted to the immense sum of five hundred thousand pounds. John Bull must have proved a goose worth the plucking, when it was discovered, that besides the vast resources of the country, George the First had contrived to squander half a million of money.

However shocking the crime, we cannot consider it extraordinary that an attempt should be made to assassinate such a King. This circumstance is thus alluded to in a letter from Lord Chesterfield to his son.

" I cannot help reading of Porsenna and Regulus with surprise and reverence; and yet I remember that I saw, without either, the execution of Shepherd, a boy of eighteen years old, who intended to shoot the late King, and who would have been pardoned, if he would have expressed the least sorrow for his intended crime; but, on the contrary, he declared that if he was pardoned, he would attempt it again; that he thought it a duty which he owed his country, and that he died

with pleasure for having endeavoured to perform it. Reason equals Shepherd with Regulus; but prejudice, and the recency of the fact, makes Shepherd a common malefactor, and Regulus a hero."

The public mind must have been in a very restless state to have brought forth such fruit as this; but the King was perfectly regardless of it, and continued in the same reckless course, impoverishing the country, and enriching his greedy favourites.

The lively pen of Horace Walpole has produced a characteristic picture of the Court of St. James's, to the *splendours* of which he was introduced when a child. "I must suppose," he says, "that the female attendants in the family must have put in my head to long to see the King. This childish caprice was so strong, that my mother solicited the Duchess of Kendal to obtain for me the honour of kissing his Majesty's hand before he set out for Hanover. A favour so unusual to be asked for a boy of ten years old, was still too slight to be refused to the wife of the first minister for her darling child; yet not being proper to be made a precedent, it was settled to be in private,

and at night. Accordingly, the night but one before the King began his last journey, my mother carried me, at ten at night, to the apartment of the Countess of Walsingham, on the ground-floor towards the garden at St. James's, which opened into that of her aunt [mother] the Duchess of Kendal; apartments occupied by George the Second after his Queen's death, and by his successive mistresses—the Countesses of Suffolk and Yarmouth.

"Notice being given that the King was come down to supper, Lady Walsingham took me alone into the Duchess's ante-room, where we found alone the King and her. I knelt down and kissed his hand. He said a few words to me, and my conductress led me back to my mother.

"The person of the King is as perfect in my memory as if I saw him but yesterday. It was that of an elderly man, rather pale, and exactly like his pictures and coins; not tall, of an aspect rather good than august, with a dark tie-wig, a plain coat, waistcoat, and breeches of snuff-coloured cloth, with stockings of the same colour, and a blue riband over all. So entirely was he my object, that I do not believe I once looked at the

Duchess; but as I could not avoid seeing her on entering the room, I remember that just beyond his Majesty stood a very tall, lean, ill-favoured old lady; but I did not retain the least idea of her features, nor know what the colour of her dress was."

This " very tall, lean, ill-favoured old lady," was all that remained of the once beautiful Mademoiselle Schulenburg, for whom the Princess Sophia Dorothea had been so infamously sacrificed. She had been one of the most greedy of the harpies who preyed upon the resources of the unfortunate kingdom, and titles and wealth had flowed upon her without stint. She, however, was not satisfied. The name and dignity of a Princess was to crown her ambitious aspirations, and she was ultimately allowed to retire to her native Germany, with a splendid fortune, and the high-sounding name of Princess of Eberstein. This retirement, however, did not last long, and did not take place till some years subsequently to the period at which we have arrived. It has been stated by Horace Walpole that her influence over the King was so great as to induce him privately

to marry her on the left hand.* However, whether married or not, the King's ugly favourite ruled him as his beautiful wife had never done. Like many others of her infamous class, she affected a wonderful respect for religion, and went seven times every Sabbath to Lutheran chapels.

Her daughters by the King, who always passed for her nieces, were of course well provided for, and made excellent marriages; the eldest being united to the celebrated Earl of Chesterfield, and the youngest to a distinguished German nobleman, the Count von Lippe. The Countess of Darlington, the "ogress," had one daughter by the King, who also shared handsomely in the general plunder that was going on, and afterwards married Viscount Howe, an Irish nobleman, by whom she had a son destined to raise the family to an enviable distinction. He was Admiral Lord Howe.

In the last years of his life, George the First

* This is also stated in a letter from Etough to Dr. Birch, in the British Museum, where the Archbishop of York has the credit, or discredit, of having performed the ceremony.—*See Add. MSS.* 4326, *B.*

seems to have felt some compunctious visitings of conscience respecting his conduct to his innocent wife. Although he had taken every possible care to prevent her escape, he had always been no less regardful for the conservation of her health. This, however, proceeded from no lingering affection for the mother of his children. For neither parent nor offspring had he any feeling of regard: indeed, with his son he was living in such undisguised hostility, that if he could have disinherited him, he would; but, like all weak minds, he was intensely superstitious, and a woman who had the reputation of a prophetess having many years previously warned him to take care of his wife, for that he would not survive her twelve months, he had employed as much care to keep her alive as to detain her in prison.

As old age began to creep upon him he became more apprehensive respecting the prophecy. His uneasiness and anxiety grew to such a height, that it is very probable, had it not been for the influence of the harpies around him, he would have restored his consort to all her rights, and acknowledged the injustice that had been done her. It has even been stated that he made proposals for

a reconciliation to his unhappy captive, and that she returned the spirited answer—" If what I am accused of be true, I am unworthy of his bed; and if the accusation be false, he is unworthy of me. I will not accept his offer."

This reply, however, seems to belong to a much earlier period of her imprisonment, when a proposal was made for her return to her husband, unaccompanied with such an acknowledgment of the wrongs she had endured, and of such security for her honour and happiness, as would have justified a virtuous woman accepting it.

Although such a proceeding is not probable at this period, considering how many persons there were about the King, deeply interested in preventing it, there is good reason for believing he looked for intelligence from the Castle of Ahlden with a morbid curiosity, and heard any account of the indisposition of his prisoner with a feverish uneasiness, as though he felt it was the herald of his own dissolution.

All this time his position in his new dominions was far from being as agreeable as he desired. He was with his people, as unpopular a monarch as ever ruled. Every kind of squib and carica-

ture was directed against his unprepossessing features and ungainly figure, whilst his passion for women uglier than himself at once provoked both ridicule and contempt. The sanguinary measures he had taken to put down the rebellion of 1715 had "scotched the snake, not killed it," and he was daily made aware that the partisans of the Pretender were becoming in greater favour with the people, who, to contrast him with their present sovereign, were duly impressed with his amiable character and handsome appearance. War threatened him at home and abroad; his arms had more than once been covered with disgrace, and he had contracted a navy debt of one million seven hundred thousand pounds.

In his domestic relations, matters were not any better. He had chosen to take offence because the Prince of Wales had thought proper to have his own child christened without reference to him, and in the first burst of his wrath, he ordered the Prince to be put under arrest, and then to quit the palace.* The Prince and his family retired to

* The King wanted to force upon his son as godfather of the infant, the Duke of Newcastle, a man the Prince particularly disliked. The squabble which ensued formed the sub-

Leicester House, where he was quickly surrounded by clever yet turbulent spirits, determined to make the most of the misunderstanding. The King made no secret of his hatred of his son, whom he took every occasion to humiliate. So intense had this feeling become, that a proposition was made to him, by a creature about the Court, to kidnap the heir apparent, and send him to the plantations; and was so far entertained by his Majesty, that only by the most powerful representations could his ministers get him to abandon it. The Prince was as little careful of concealing his contempt for his father, whom he was equally ready to aggravate. The sayings and doings of the two, in opposition to each other, afforded infinite food for scandal.

George the First continued to grow more morose and more uneasy, and frequently gave way to violent fits of passion. In the midst of his troubles he received news from Germany of the serious

ject of a burlesque upon Chevy Chase, written by Lord Stanhope, afterwards the celebrated Earl of Chesterfield. The ideas expressed are remarkable for anything rather than refinement, but the verses contain a good deal of humorous satire.

illness of his persecuted consort. The Princess had made her last effort to effect her liberation, after an incarceration of upwards of thirty years. She had hoped for assistance from her daughter, and her mind had become buoyant with the most sanguine anticipations of success. But the Queen of Prussia either could not or would not do anything for her, and the Count de Bar proved a traitor.

Previously to this disappointment, the unhappy prisoner had contrived to preserve her good looks, and seemed to enjoy excellent health. In the latter part of her life she was still tall, and rather portly in her appearance. This is confirmed by the evidence of Mary Rathye, who had always lived at Ahlden, and had frequently assisted in cleaning the apartments during the residence of the Princess. The same statement has been made by Caroline Wilhelmina Hardt, widow of a surgeon at Ahlden, yet a native of Turkey, who had been at Ahlden, and was acquainted with the person of the royal captive.

She continued to drive about the neighbourhood, attended as usual by a legion of guards and spies; was as busy as ever in superintending her household, though the same details had been her

daily task for nearly thirty-two years; and took the same interest in the advancement of the village children, though a second generation had taken the place of those who first obtained her notice; and continued to write, though her correspondents had been so thinned by death, they were reduced almost entirely to the person entrusted with her negociations with her daughter.

A sense of despair seems at last to have crushed her high spirit. She took to her bed in the autumn of 1726. A strong fever, with great mental excitement, was her malady. Her attendants thought she was delirious, for she spoke wildly of her wrongs, and made use of strange expressions respecting her husband. The spies were horror-struck at the awful earnestness with which the dying victim of domestic tyranny denounced their employer; and the authorities at Ahlden strove to prevent any news of these terrible scenes and revelations getting abroad.

The patient grew worse, and on the 13th of November, the once lovely and innocent Princess Sophia Dorothea of Zelle, lay a corpse in the prison in which she had so long been immured. Thirty-two years—a life to many—the unhappy

creature had thus dragged out, robbed of her children, her liberty, and her rights.

There is no record of so abominable a wrong ever having been committed even by the worst of despots. The Neros and Caligulas were careless of human life; the monsters of the Inquisition were regardless of human suffering; the Marats and Robespierres shed seas of human blood; but incarnate demons as these were, they tortured and they killed, and all was over. We have heard of slow fires for the victims of intolerance, and prolonged torments for criminals of state, but what executioner ever before presided over a torture that was to last for the best part of half a century? This cold-blooded atrocity, too, to be inflicted on a delicate female—a Princess by birth, a wife, and a mother!

Yet an executioner was found who went through this unparalleled cruelty with a stern determination that the most unfeeling inquisitors, and the worst of revolutionary miscreants, might have envied; and he was the man whose dull heart had been warmed by the affections of his victim, who was the father of her children, and by the laws of

God and man the conservator of her happiness and the guardian of her honour.

We have had pretty specimens of royal tyranny in our Richard the Third and Henry the Eighth. Both monarchs were remarkable for their want of sympathy for their own flesh and blood. Yet their murders were, comparatively speaking, humane. The slow assassination of his wife by George the First, in infamy, stands alone and unrivalled. But the act, atrocious as it is, becomes the more infamous when we look at the vile and paltry causes that led to it. A profligate husband, leaguing himself with a bevy of wantons to disgrace his own wife: a wife who, after the most searching inquiry, has been adjudged free from crime, and who, in truth, was but too virtuous in heart, and too noble in spirit, for the base crew amongst which it was her misfortune that her lot should be cast. The case is a most deplorable one: the even-handed justice which we are wont to attribute to human nature as an all-pervading influence, seems to have entirely disappeared, and in its place we see vice triumphant, dishonour exalted, and meanness taking the privi-

leges of nobility, while a helpless and innocent woman is left for thirty-two years pining away in an obscure prison, hopelessly enduring a fate only awarded to the most dangerous, or the most degraded criminals.

When George the First heard that his victim had, by the sure aid of death, passed from his iron grasp, the prophecy came upon his conscience with an irresistible force. It will generally be found that these evil doers, beyond the reach of the law, are exceedingly subject to "the still small voice," that makes them tremble even in their pride of power, as though they were in the presence of the avenging angel. Some secret superstition—some powerful presentiment—or some touch of remorse, brings down the tyrant's spirit, and makes it crawl in fear and humbleness, even to the coming of that summons which shall send it a grovelling suppliant to the judgment-seat, whose everlasting principles it has so grossly outraged.

So it was with the Hanoverian King of England. In the intelligence of his wife's death, he heard the warning of his own. He fell into a

profound melancholy, out of which of course all the attractions of his ugly harem could not charm him. If roused by some more vehement burst of passion than ordinary against his son, or against some other of his connexions, he would sink again into the same unwholesome torpor. Month passed after month, appearing to him as so many steps to a yawning gulph of pitchy blackness and unfathomable depth which he was involuntarily approaching. His feelings became torturing: his sense of impending evil, traced like a second Belshazzar, the awful hand-writing on the wall. He felt an irresistible longing to visit Hanover; and on the 3rd of June started from England, in company with the Duchess of Kendal and Lord Townshend. Both his companions, however, were left at different places, while he travelled, as it seemed, towards the spot where, in the family vaults at Zelle, her attendants had consigned, with proper honours, the corpse of his repudiated consort.

The official accounts state, that on the morning of the 10th the King was seized with a fit of apoplexy whilst travelling in his carriage, and when he reached Ippenburen, he was discovered in a state of insensibility, with his eye-balls gla-

ring fixedly, and his tongue hanging out of his mouth. The attendants proposed staying where they were, and seeking medical assistance, but the King had sufficient power of speech to say, "Osnabrück, Osnabrück!" and to this place they set off at full speed. It was the last word the King ever uttered, for on the equipage stopping at this episcopal city, George the First was found to be a corpse.

There is, however, another account, which, tinged as it is with superstition, we cannot refrain from giving. The authority is Lockhart of Carnwath, a Jacobite partisan, who left some interesting memorials of the stirring events of those times.

"Having," he says, "mentioned King George's death, it will not be reckoned a great digression to give an account of a paper which, perhaps, is not so well known in Britain as in other parts of Europe. About eight or ten weeks after his death, the copy of a letter was propagated and handed about at most of the courts of Europe, especially in Germany. An account and copy thereof, was, whilst I was at Aix-la-Chapelle, sent by a gentleman of distinction in Paris to a French

officer, and the like from Vienna to General Count Kelling, Governor of Luxembourg, who gave me the copy of it, and assured me it was dispersed all over Germany. He added that some people gave no credit to the commission mentioned in the letter being either given or executed, believing the whole to be a story forged to vindicate the reputation of the late Electress of Hanover. However that may be, it took with a great many, and be the story true or false, the displaying it so industriously showed that the said Electress's friends, some naming her son, and others the King of Prussia, carried their resentment high against her husband, by their endeavours to blacken his memory, and represent his exit in such a manner. Follows the letter in English from the French :—

" The circumstances of King George's death are terrible, and worth the knowledge of all our friends : they are kept as much concealed as possible, even in Germany, so probably will be a secret both in England and France. What was told me lately, by a person of superior rank, and of great esteem in these parts, I had heard imperfectly before from a lady of quality. It seemed

when the late Electress was dangerously ill of her last sickness, she delivered to a faithful friend a letter to her husband, upon promise that it should be given into his own hands. It contained a protestation of her innocence, a reproach for his hard usage and unjust treatment, and concluded with *a summons or citation to her husband to appear within the year and the day at the divine tribunal*, and there to answer for the long and many injuries she had received from him.

"As this letter could not with safety to the bearer be delivered in England or Hanover, it was given to him in his coach on the road. He opened it immediately, supposing it came from Hanover: he was so struck with these unexpected contents, and his fatal citation, that his convulsions and apoplexy came fast on him; after being blooded, his mouth turned awry, and they then proposed to drive off to a nearer place than Osnabürg, but he signed twice or thrice with his hand to go on, and that was the only mark of sense he showed. This is no secret among the Catholics in Germany, but the Protestants hush it up as much as they can." *

* Lockhart Papers, vol. ii. p. 351.

There may, in this marvellous narrative, be some exaggeration, but there is nothing incredible in the principal features of it. The poor Princess on her death-bed was known to have expressed herself very strongly, and there is every reason to believe did write a letter to her husband, upbraiding him for his infamous conduct towards her. Writing under great excitement, there is nothing extraordinary in the strange citation which it was reported she had so forcibly addressed to him; and if this letter was delivered to the King on his journey, in the state of mind in which he was at that period, it was very likely to produce apoplexy.

That this was a fulfilment of the prophecy to which we have alluded, we are not prepared to aver, nor is there anything marvellous in the existence of such a prediction, because it might have been made by some friend of the Princess, knowing her lord's superstitious tendencies, with the object of insuring her safety. We believe of all the many apparently supernatural things that are continually exciting the attention of the vulgar, their marvellous effects might be traced to very common-place causes, had we the proper clue.

The death of George the First seems to have very much the appearance of what is familiarly called "a judgment;" and if ever there was an instance where one was called for, and was likely to have a wholesome effect, it was this. But in whatever light we regard it, there are many attendant circumstances that make it peculiarly awful, and the mind the most free from superstitious influences can scarcely divest itself of a latent belief, that this sudden rupture of the King's soul from his body, was a manifestation of the existence of that incorruptible and unavoidable justice, that, with the like impartiality, called to its awful tribunal the broken-hearted wife and her profligate tyrant.

The demise of George the First was as unexpected by most of his friends, as by himself. The Duchess of Kendal, or rather the Princess of Eberstein, had reason to be the most shocked. The intelligence was brought to her as she was hastening to join him, and she instantly gave way to a transport of the most violent grief, tearing her hair, beating her breast, and committing the wildest extravagances of woe. When sufficiently recovered to proceed, she travelled to Bruns-

wick, where she lived in seclusion for three months.

Her occupation was gone. She had been too active in exciting and keeping up the animosity of the deceased King against his son and successor, to be tolerated in a new reign within the precincts of the court; therefore she soon found it was necessary that she should reconcile herself to a more honest course of life, seeing there was nothing more to be got by her infamy. We believe she became what the world styles "highly respectable," and principally resided at Kendal House, near Twickenham, where she died in the spring of 1743, at the mature age of eighty-four, leaving immense wealth, and being, of course, universally lamented.

Horace Walpole, who printed every legend he heard, however extravagant, says, "In a tender mood, George the First promised the Duchess of Kendal that if she survived him, and it were possible for the departed to return to this world, he would make her a visit. The Duchess, on his death, so much expected the accomplishment of that engagement, that a large raven, or some black fowl, flying into one

of the windows of her villa at Isleworth, she was persuaded it was the soul of her departed monarch so accoutred, and received and treated it with all the respect and tenderness of duty, till the royal bird or she took their last flight."

The Duchess happened to be in Germany when the King died, so that the "royal bird" must have been some time finding his way to the country mansion of his expectant mistress.

Of the younger of the two superannuated courtezans who had proved such vindictive enemies to Sophia Dorothea, little remains to be said. The Countess of Darlington died in the year 1730, though the junior of her more powerful coadjutor, preceding her to the tomb by several years. The King, however, could not be satisfied with a reduced establishment, but in selecting a lady to supply the vacancy, either from policy or inclination, chose an Englishwoman. She was a Miss Brett, daughter of the infamous Countess of Macclesfield, and sister of the poet Savage. She also was allowed apartments in St. James' Palace, and notwithstanding her evident advantages in youth and looks, she contrived in a very short time to render herself as obnoxious to the royal

family as either of her unprepossessing seniors. Fortunately her reign was brief: the sudden death of her royal protector made it necessary she shonld quit the building she disgraced with as much alacrity as she had entered it. The rest of the Hanoverian coterie dispersed at the same time, as they were soon made aware that their services might be dispensed with by the new sovereign.

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE son of Sophia Dorothea was also affected by the death of George the First, but we cannot state that he was greatly grieved at it. The animosity that existed between the father and son had made prodigious advances in the few last months of the old King's life. Probably the death of the unhappy captive at Ahlden had given a fresh stimulus to her son's ill feeling towards his other parent. He had shown more than once a deep interest in her sufferings, and had she survived her husband, it is presumed he would have lost no time in effecting her liberation, and probably would have placed her in a position worthy of her rank. The existence of this favourable feeling towards his persecuted mother, however, does not rest upon the very best authority; but there can be no question as to the hostility he

exhibited towards his father both before and after his decease.

There is a story of Mrs. Howard, afterwards Countess of Suffolk, having, on the day he ascended the throne, discovered in his apartment, a picture representing a lady habited in the electoral robes, which proved to be a portrait of his mother the Prince had secreted while his father lived, but displayed directly he heard of his death. This, however, seems apocryphal. The Princess was a prisoner before her husband succeeded to the electorate, and it is not very probable that she obtained the electoral robes while suffered to bear only the title of Duchess of Ahlden, or that she found an artist to take her portrait in the closely-watched fortress in which she was confined. Nevertheless, the Crown Prince may have employed an artist to paint such a portrait without his seeing the original, and in such a costume, and this he may have concealed; but we regret to say there is no evidence of his having performed an act so creditable to him.

An extraordinary display of the state of his feelings occurred when Dr. Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, one of the executors appointed by

the late King, appeared before the Privy Council to make known the conditions of his last will. The Archbishop was going to read it, when the new monarch very coolly walked up to him, seized hold of the document, turned on his heel, and quitted the council chamber. The will was never afterwards seen or heard of,—one of the many striking instances that occurred of the extraordinary respect for the laws of the country they had been called to govern, displayed by the two first sovereigns of the house of Hanover.

"The poor prelate," says Horace Walpole, who gives a detailed account of this curious scene, "was thunderstruck when George the Second stalked out of the room with the will in his pocket, and had not the presence of mind or the courage to demand the testament's being opened, or at least to have it registered. No man present chose to be more hardy than the person to whom the deposit had been trusted; perhaps none of them immediately conceived the possible violation of so solemn an act so notoriously existent. Still, as the King never mentioned the will more, whispers only by degress informed the public that the

will had been burned, at least that its injunctions were never fulfilled.

"What the contents were," the same writer adds, "was never ascertained. Report said that forty-thousand pounds had been bequeathed to the Duchess of Kendal, and more vague rumours spoke of a large legacy to the Queen of Prussia, daughter of the late King. Of that bequest demands were afterwards said to have been frequently and roughly made by her son, the great King of Prussia, (Frederick the Great,) between whom and his uncle subsisted much inveteracy."

It became rumoured that the Countess of Walsingham was mentioned in this testament with a bequest to a very large amount; and her husband, the Earl of Chesterfield, subsequently, when he had been rudely treated by the new sovereign, was not disposed to be so impudently cheated out of his legacy. He commenced legal proceedings, which, according to some accounts, George the Second stopped by paying the sum of twenty thousand pounds; Glover, the author of Leonidas, in an account of the transaction introduced in his memoirs, says fifty thousand pounds.

"But if the Archbishop," continues Walpole, whose revelations are as startling as they are caustic, "had too timidly betrayed the trust reposed in him from weakness and want of spirit, there were two other men who had no such plea of imbecility, and who, being independent and above being awed, basely sacrificed their honour and integrity for positive sordid gain. George the First had deposited duplicates of his will with two sovereign German princes. I will not specify them, because at this distance of time I do not perfectly recollect their titles; but I was actually, some years ago, shown a copy of a letter from one of our ambassadors abroad to a secretary of state at that period, in which the ambassador said, one of the princes in question would accept the proffered subsidy, and had delivered, or would deliver, the duplicate of the King's will. The other trustee was no doubt as little conscientious and as corrupt. It is a pity the late King of Prussia did not learn their infamous treachery. Discoursing once with Lady Suffolk on that suppressed testament, she made the only plausible shadow of an excuse that could be made for George the Second. She told me that George the First had

burned two wills made in favour of his son. They were probably the wills of the Duke and Duchess of Zelle, or one of them might be that of his mother, the Princess Sophia."

As the testamentary arrangements of the Duke and Duchess of Zelle are well known, the first guess of Horace Walpole as to the destroyed wills is wide of the mark, but in the other it is clear he is correct. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the unhappy prisoner at Ahlden desired to bequeath her property to her children, and did so bequeath it; and it is very probable that at different periods she executed two different testaments. At her decease, both must have fallen into the hands of her husband; and as he seized her property, and was at variance with both her children, he of course made away with these wills. Walpole's authority, Lady Suffolk, was likely to be well informed of this iniquitous transaction by her intimate connexion with the court.

The son of Sophia Dorothea was not quite so bad a sovereign to the people of England as her husband had been; but he was very far from being a good one, and much of what was creditable in his conduct he owed to the influence of

his consort, who with some affectations united much strong sense and considerable tact in conducting herself towards a person of his disposition. A couplet in Tickell's "Kensington Garden" tells us that she was

> "Form'd to gain hearts that Brunswick's cause denied,
> And charm a people to her father's side."

Nevertheless she possessed some strange characteristics, not the least amusing of which was her exhibition of a capacity she fancied she possessed for giving her attention to matters most dissimilar and unconnected. Her particular pursuits, as she chose to display them, were a sort of "happy family" of things as uncongenial and antagonistic as possible. "Her levees," we are told by Archdeacon Coxe, "were a strange picture of the motley character and manners of a queen and a learned woman. She received company while she was at her toilet; prayers, and sometimes a sermon, were read; learned men and divines were intermixed with courtiers and ladies of the household; the conversation turned on metaphysical subjects, blended with repartees, sallies of mirth, and the tittle-tattle of a drawing-room."

An historian of our own period adds a few graphic touches to this picture:—"On the table, perhaps, lay heaped together the newest ode by Stephen Duck upon her beauty, her last letter from Leibnitz upon free-will, and a most high-wrought panegyric of Dr. Clarke on her "inevitable sweetness of temper," "impartial love of truth," and "very particular and uncommon degree of knowledge, even on matters of the most abstract speculation."*

But the cleverness of Queen Caroline, universal as she desired to represent it, could not save her consort from the vices and follies he appears to have inherited with the crown. As it had been with his predecessor, Hanover continued to be regarded as "the immediate jewel of his soul," and the prosperity of his kingdom was jeopardised by his interest in this petty electorate. He visited the latter more than once, and made some inquiries into the transactions connected with his mother's history and fate. But George the Second was of too indolent a nature to carry out such measures in the manner the case required. He merely examined the letters sent by

* Lord Mahon's History of England.

Sophia Dorothea to the unfortunate Königsmark, and then made the same use of them it is probable he had previously made of his father's will,—he burnt them.*

In his visits to his continental dominions, the son of Sophia Dorothea followed the footsteps of his father by entangling himself with mistresses; and after the death of his consort he still more conspicuously proved his claim to the blood royal by quartering them in the palace.

If ever there was an instance of that fearful threat held out in the decalogue, of *visiting the sins of the fathers, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me*, it is observable in the history of the persecutor of this innocent Princess, and of his descendants. A curse seemed upon them all, the worst of curses,—the curse of family dissension. George the First waged a most unholy war with his heir, and died suddenly. George the Second exhibited the bitterest hatred of his eldest son, Prince Frederick. This Prince died before his father, after a brief illness, on the 20th of

* In the "Biographie Universelle" it is stated that these letters have been preserved, and are in the possession of the descendants of Count Königsmark's younger sister.

March, 1751, in the forty-ninth year of his age. Like both his predecessors, he was most remarkable for very little intellect and still less principle. The following cotemporary lines will convey to the reader a pretty accurate idea of the degree of respect in which the Prince and other members of his family were held by the people.

"Here lies Fred,
Who was alive and is dead.
Had it been his father,
I had much rather;
Had it been his brother,
Still better than another;
Had it been his sister,
No one would have missed her;
Had it been the whole generation,
Still better for the nation;
But since 'tis only Fred,
Who was alive and is dead,
There's no more to be said."

The death of the son of Sophia Dorothea was as sudden as that of his father. He was in his seventy-eighth year, and apparently in good health. One morning, after taking his chocolate, his valet de chambre heard a noise in the chamber into

which the King had gone, and entering found his master on the floor, having, in falling, cut the right side of his face against the edge of a bureau; and after a gasp he expired. His mistress, Lady Yarmouth, was in attendance, but, as in the case of the Duchess of Kendal with George the First, she arrived too late. Neither father nor son derived any consolation from religion in their last moments, nor did they during their lives show that they felt for it any respect.

A striking coincidence is observed in the stories of Sophia Dorothea, and in that of her great-granddaughter, Caroline Matilda, the sister of George the Third. This Princess was beautiful and intelligent, and while still very young was married to Christian VII., King of Denmark, a young man of weak mind, debauched habits, and unprepossessing appearance, who was completely in the hands of a little coterie of female relatives. To emancipate him from such subjection, and secure the improvement of Denmark, the young Queen took a lively interest in the schemes of two of the ablest statesmen in the kingdom, the minister Struensee and Count Brandt, who, like herself, had the prosperity of Denmark completely at heart. The

poor idiot, however, she had married, was made to believe by the Dowager Queen, who hated her fairer and more powerful rival, that his consort was engaged in an intrigue with Struensee to force the King to abdicate, that they might have entire control over the government. The result was the secret arrest of all the parties accused, and subsequent execution of these able ministers. Caroline Matilda was saved by the timely interposition of her brother the King of England, who sent three frigates to convey her and her attendants from a country where she had been so sadly misplaced. She took up her residence at Zelle, where she remained till her death, on the 10th of May, 1775. A little work has lately been published at Copenhagen, founded on the story of this unfortunate victim of a state marriage, by Carl Bernard, which, under the title of "Gamle Minder," and in an imaginative form, contains many interesting particulars of this hapless descendant of Sophia Dorothea.

The son of Prince Frederick next ascended the throne, with the title of George the Third. In moral qualities he would have weighed down a regiment of such *light* characters as his father,

grandfather, great-grandfather, and great great-grandfather, and was deservedly as much loved and venerated by his subjects as his predecessors were detested and despised. Unhappily the curse of family dissension embittered his declining years; but he was made miserable, not only by the hostility of his son, but by his profligacy—a family vice, from which, although George III. was free, it broke out in his heir with all the offensive characteristics that had disgraced his German ancestors.

This son succeeded his father, as George the Fourth, and although he had no heir apparent, like his predecessors, to hate, the affections of his only child, the Princess Charlotte, had been estranged from him long before her lamented and premature death, and his quarrel with his consort, Caroline of Brunswick, appeared a pretty powerful display of the family curse.

But in this most bitter feud, the moral *King's evil*, that had been the hereditary disease of this family, expended itself. We do not assert that it died for want of heirs male; but certain it is, that when the crown of these kingdoms went out of the direct line, not only did such discreditable

bickerings disappear entirely, but the possessors of the throne became remarkable for virtues, such as had hitherto been rare in the best of sovereigns, and consequently they enjoyed the affectionate respect of all classes of their subjects, to a degree never before witnessed in this country, or, we believe, in any other.

We must now return to the daughter of Sophia Dorothea, of whose domestic enjoyments we have already given the reader some insight. She had a family of several children by the King of Prussia, who as he grew older became more tyrannical, till at last his despotism took the character of a frantic brutality. He was perfectly indifferent to the sufferings of the unfortunate mother of his consort, and heard of her death with such interest only as had its source in the property she was expected to leave. Of this, or of the greater part, George the First deprived him, a proceeding which excited his bitterest hostility against the English Court. This feeling did not improve at the death of George the First. The brothers-in-law interchanged personalities; George the Second styling Frederick William his "brother the corporal," and "arch-sandstrewer of the holy Roman

empire;" and the King of Prussia retorting on his brother of England by designating him as his "dear brother the comedian."

The Margravine of Bayreuth, the granddaughter of Sophia Dorothea, has left in her memoirs a most disgusting picture of this monarch. Some of her revelations we have already quoted; but abominable as his conduct appears in these, it is excusable in comparison with the atrocities he subsequently committed. Nor are we much more pleased with the conduct of the Queen of Prussia, which is far from being blameless. The strange whims the King chose to display seem to savour of insanity, they were so absurdly, and sometimes so impiously irrational.

"The King," says his daughter, "preached a sermon to us every afternoon; and his valet-de-chambre gave out a hymn, in which we all joined. We were obliged to listen to the sermon, as though it were that of an apostle. Sometimes my brother and I could not help laughing; all the anathemas of the church were instantly launched at us, and we were obliged to submit to them with a contrite and penitent look, which we found it difficult enough to assume. This excessive bigotry sug-

gested to the King still more extravagant ideas. He resolved to abdicate the crown in favour of my brother. 'He would reserve,' he said, 'for himself, an income of ten thousand crowns a year, and retire with the Queen and his daughters to Wusterhausen. There,' he added, 'I will pray to God and attend to the cultivation of my land, while my wife and my daughters shall manage the house-keeping. You are a clever girl,' said he to me, 'I will give you the care of the linen, which you shall mend; and of the soap. Frederica, who is covetous, shall have the custody of the provisions; Charlotte shall go to market for victuals; and my wife shall look after my young ones and the kitchen.'" .

Happy would it have been for his family had he contented himself with talking in this idle fashion; but as his sons and daughters grew up, he treated them in the most scandalous manner. His eldest son, a youth of eighteen, he was in the habit of caning on any trivial offence. This usage became so unbearable, that the Prince endeavoured to withdraw himself from his father's dominions. He was intercepted and brought before his father, who was with difficulty prevented from running

him through the body. The King contented himself with causing him to be closely confined in prison, but the youth's associates were ruthlessly brought to the block.

Though he had not taken the Prince's life, he had the barbarity to tell the Queen and her daughters that he had. The first interview of this wretch with his family, after he had become acquainted with his son's offence, was signalised by one of the most savage acts of ferocity ever recorded. "We all hastened to him," says his daughter, "to kiss his hand; but no sooner did he set eyes on me, than, inflamed with rage and fury, he turned quite black in the face, his eyes glared, and he foamed at the mouth. '*Infamous blackguard!*' said he to me, 'darest thou appear in my presence? Go keep thy scoundrel of a brother company.' As he thus spoke he seized me with one hand, and *gave me several blows with his fist on the face;* one of which upon the temple, was so violent, that it knocked me backwards, and I should have split my skull against a corner of the wainscot, if Madame de Sousfield had not caught hold of my dress. The King, unable to control himself, would have struck me again and

trampled upon me, but was prevented by the Queen, my brothers and sisters, and the other persons present. They surrounded me, and thus allowed time to Mesdames Kamecke and Sousfield to lift me up and place me in a chair in the embrasure of a window which was close by. Seeing that I got no better, they despatched one of my sisters for a glass of water and a smelling-bottle, by means of which they somewhat revived me. I reproached them for the trouble they took with me, as death would have been infinitely preferable to life in the then state of things."

It seems marvellous that so brutal a monster could have been tolerated in any society. Yet such was the son-in-law of Sophia Dorothea: and by such conduct he *cowed* his son into submission to his wishes, and they subsequently lived in greater harmony, till this despot's death, in the year 1740, when the Prince ascended the throne of Prussia. The Queen does not deserve to be considered either a wise or a good mother. Indeed, her daughter expressly says, " She loved her children only in as far as they were subservient to her ambitious views." Nevertheless the young King behaved very handsomely to his surviving parent,

on whom he conferred the title of Queen-Mother. She retired to a little villa in the capital called *Mon Bijou*, where she lived out the remainder of her days in an indolent happiness, the most delightful part of which must have been drawn from observing the increasing greatness of her son. She died on the 28th of June, 1757, deeply regretted by the King.

The history of the celebrated grandson of Sophia Dorothea must be familiar to every reader. The life of Frederick the Great being almost as well known in this country as in his own.* At his death, the crown went from the direct line; Frederick being succeeded by his nephew. Thus in both branches descending from Sophia Dorothea, each of which succeeded to royal dignities, these honours passed from the right line—the male branch in the fifth generation—the female in the third.

Her descendants from her daughter have witnessed many changes, and have taken a prominent

* The best life of this hero is that edited by the late Thomas Campbell, of which a second edition, in two volumes, has just been published. We have frequently availed ourselves of the vast mass of information this work conveys.

part in the great European drama which was played out at Waterloo. The living representatives of the two royal houses descended from this unfortunate Princess, are the present King of Prussia, one of the wisest and ablest sovereigns of the German continent, and our beloved Queen Victoria, whose rule may Providence prolong for many years.

The Electorate of Hanover had the honour of being raised to the dignity of a kingdom in the reign of George the Third, 1815—a distinction that even the politic and ambitious Bishop of Osnabrück perhaps did not dream of; and when the Crown of England descended to a female in default of heirs male, the Salic law there having full force and authority, the Hanoverian throne was ascended by the next male descendant of Sophia Dorothea, who was George the Third's fifth son—the Duke of Cumberland.

We have endeavoured to ascertain what degree of interest in the history of Sophia Dorothea, was felt by her descendants. We have shown how much regard her children exhibited towards her. We are not aware that her grand-children testified any particular respect for her memory

The royal family of Prussia were far from being well pleased with the arbitrary manner in which George the First behaved in destroying his wife's will, and seizing her property on her decease, and this caused increased ill feeling between the two courts, which was aggravated by the indifference of George the Second. Frederick the Great had, it might be said, sufficient employment in dealing with his living enemies to prevent his bestowing much attention on the case of a dead relation; but her other grandson, his namesake, Frederick Prince of Wales, had no such excuse. He was at once too selfish and too indolent to give himself any trouble in such a matter; nor does it appear that any of his father's or uncle's family were more affectionately disposed.

The first of her family who displayed any decided interest in her history, was her great-granddaughter, the hapless Caroline Matilda, whose exile from the kingdom of her libertine husband, being passed in the neighbourhood of Sophia Dorothea's birth-place and prison, added to the extraordinary similarity in their fates, led her to devote a great deal of attention to what must have appeared to her an extremely interesting

portion of her family history. Both George the Third and Queen Charlotte also testified a marked interest in the subject, and this was still more manifest in some of their children. George the Fourth visited his Hanoverian dominions, but we are not surprised at finding his inquiries into the story of a neglected wife very few. Though he seems to have cared little about Sophia Dorothea, he showed more respect for the family of which she was a member. At least this we are left to infer, from the Dedication to him by Sir Andrew Halliday,* of his "Annals of the House of Hanover." This gentleman was domestic physician to the Duke of Clarence, and having formed the acquaintance of the Rev. George Gündell, A. M., Chaplain-General of the Hanoverian army, whilst his Royal Highness was in Germany, they under the Duke's auspices made researches, and collected documents illustrative of the history of the House of Brunswick-Lüneburg, which the

* Sir Andrew Halliday, M. D., F. R. S. E., Fellow of the Royal Society of Göttingen, Knight of the Order of Guelph, &c. &c. There is ample evidence in his books, that he was a better courtier than he was an author. It is to be hoped he was a much better physician than either.

Doctor edited and published in the year 1820, in a quarto volume. This work he followed six years subsequently by his "Annals of the House of Hanover," in two vols. octavo. In these publications, Sir Andrew has contributed scarcely anything to the very scanty stock of information respecting the consort of George the First, that had been made public, and his statements relating to her look very like an attempt to conceal the truth.

The Duke of Cambridge was long a resident in Hanover, and from the exalted position he held there, possessed every opportunity for becoming acquainted with the whole merits of the case: nor did he neglect them, and, as may readily be believed, from what is known of his Royal Highness's disposition, he felt a becoming indignation at the abominable tyranny of which that illustrious Princess became the victim. The Duke of Sussex felt the same manly sympathy, and left in the margin of works, since dispersed by the sale of the noble library he possessed, illustrative of the life of Sophia Dorothea, notes in his own hand-writing, indicative of the interest he took in her history.

The Princesses were equally regardful of the claims upon their attention; but in the display of their sympathy the most remarkable was the Princess Elizabeth. Her Royal Highness was known to possess much literary talent, united with a taste for the arts; and after her marriage with the Landgrave of Hesse Homburg, and when near the locality her unhappy relative had rendered famous, these accomplishments were devoted to writing a history of Sophia Dorothea, which she embellished with careful drawings. This interesting MS. is preserved in the palace at Hesse Homburg, and the portraits which form frontispieces to these volumes are amongst its most valued illustrations.

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SOME ACCOUNT

OF

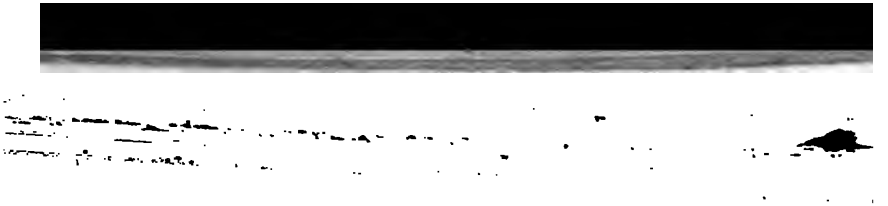
THE MISUNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

THE ELECTOR OF HANOVER,

(SINCE KING OF GREAT BRITAIN,)

AND HIS LADY.



SOME ACCOUNT

OF

THE MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE ELECTOR OF HANOVER,

(SINCE KING OF GREAT BRITAIN,)

AND HIS LADY.

[We here print from an original manuscript a specimen of the numerous accounts circulated in Germany of the quarrel between Sophia Dorothea and her husband. It assumes to be a translation of a statement written by the Crown Prince of Hanover (George I.) to his father-in-law the Duke of Zelle, of his daughter's delinquencies with Count Königsmark, and improper conduct as a wife in other respects, with copies of letters said to have been written by her to the Count. Ex-parte as all this is, we consider the case made out so plausibly, far from being as favourable to the husband as he desired. It will be seen that the letters have neither names nor dates, nor is there any way of authenticating the MS., which consists of thirty-two closely written quarto pages in the hand-writing common at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and was found bound up with a printed poem of twenty-two quarto pages with the following title, "The Atheist, a Philosophical Poem, representing and confuting the Arguments brought in favour of their Tenets. *Jovis omnia Plena. Virgil.* By WILLIAM DAWSON. London: printed for the author, 1723." Although the statement contains much that is totally false, and cannot be produced as evidence against the Princess, some of its details are so curious and characteristic as to render it an interesting illustration of her history.]

MY LORD,

NOTWITHSTANDING the nearness in blood to your illustrious person, the many weighty affairs you have now

under your hand, and the constant applications you have for the welfare of your noble family, I am sure you cannot but be sensible of the uneasiness I am under when I write to you, that would move the most obdurate to pity.

'Tis, therefore, I am persuaded, the greatness of your soul minds nothing more than to comfort the afflicted, and support those who are oppressed. This emboldens me to give you the trouble of reading an account of some undecencies, and violences I have suffered of late, which I believe will move your compassion; for I have not drawn them upon myself by any ill conduct—you yourself, sir, shall judge of it, and, if you please, remedy it.

You know, sir, how I married into your most illustrious house, and took to my bed, Madam ———, your daughter, whose beauty and many noble endowments of mind rendered her worthy of the greatest monarch; and I must further own to you that in the beginning of our union her ladyship paid me all the devoirs to which marriage engages those who know the obligations of it; and that I thought myself beloved by her with all the faithfulness imaginable. I returned her esteem and caresses with the affection and tenderness of a husband; and I dare persuade myself that my beautiful spouse had no cause to complain of my coldness, so that we lived happy at that time; and heaven, who beheld our harmony, showed that it was approved of, by blessing our marriage, for we had in the first years two children; and I did not doubt but that my spouse, seeing that I made her mother of offspring, that promised all that could be expected from them, would straighten those bonds closer which engaged her to me, but alas, I was strangely mistaken, for in a few

years I began to perceive that my spouse was tired when we were by ourselves; and that she had no longer that air, and endearing aspect which I had usually beheld in her. She soon added disdain to her ill-humour, and I found myself treated in a haughty manner which touched me to the soul.

As my conduct has ever been very regular, and as I never had anything to reproach myself with, I imagined I should be able to regain my spouse's affections, not being in the least inclined to believe that she could ever give in to so much indifference, as to let another share that bed which was my exclusive right and property. I imagined that this coldness would soon be over, and that by a due care and strict penetration, I should be able to triumph over any injustice that should be attempted. But I found, to my misfortune, that I was mistaken; and I was but too well convinced of this, by an adventure which pierced my heart, whereof I am constrained to give you, sir, a particular relation.

You know, sir, that it is a custom among persons of quality, to give one another a new year's gift, on new year's day; I thought I should oblige my lady by making her a present at that time. I chose to that end, one of the finest and largest jewels I had, which, with a compliment suitable to the occasion, I caused to be presented to her. But the lady, your daughter, regarded it with a discontented air, and told me in a haughty manner, that I might have spared that cost, since she had so many of such trifles by her already. And to add an affront to her disdain, that very day she gave away that fine present to a young nobleman, who might have had merit enough in him to deserve it, had he not made ill use of those generous entertainments I gave him in my family.

But as, my lord, it was some time before I knew of this affront, which touched me so nearly, yet I must confess to you that to ease myself I was willing to impart my uneasiness to some person I could confide in. To that end, I unhappily took for my confidant the perfidious nobleman just mentioned, who (as I have since reason to believe) was the cause of my misfortunes, as I will tell you in a moment, for when he perceived that I had made him master of all my secrets, he at first seemed to sympathise with me as a friend, and when I saw him thus concerned, I asked his advice what to do on that occasion. He answered,—"Sir, you are prudent; but had I a wife that used me thus, I could hardly forgive her; and I should begin, by refusing her all the endearments she might expect from me."

This was the pernicious advice this deceiver gave me; who some days after played me the basest, most impudent, and unworthy trick that was ever put upon a person of my rank and quality, as I concealed nothing from him, and of all the retinue about me in him I confided most, yet I perceived he had gained so much esteem with my spouse as to wear the jewel I gave her, even before my face.

You must, my lord, acknowledge a man to be of an uncommon temper to support himself under all this; and therefore, I presumed, you would not blame me if I kept a very watchful eye upon the conduct of Madam ———, your daughter; not but that I had the command of my temper so far as to conceal my resentments from my false confidant.

At first I was resolved to take no notice of this indiscretion; but my passion become too violent to hinder me

from going to her apartments, where, with looks that bespoke something of justice in my demand, I asked her for the jewel I had flung away upon her as a new year's gift. The shock she was under, to hear me ask it in such terms, raised in her face such arguments of guilt, that she had not power to make any other reply, than that it might be lost for what she knew.

"This loss," said I to her, "inspires me with strange thoughts; and I fear you have made an ill use of it."—"How, sir," answered she, "do you question my fidelity?"—"Yes," said I, sincerely, "I do question it, and shall be very much persuaded, unless this jewel be found, that you have given it to some gallant."—"To what gallant?" replied she, in a transport; "no man of honour can accuse me of such a crime."

"You have spoken the truth," added I, "since no man of honour will expose himself to so much suspicion." This reply, which anger drew suddenly from my mouth, adding to my passion, made me go on thus: "You take too much upon you, madam, in answering me with so much insolence. But let me tell you, if ever you speak to me again in this manner, it will, perhaps, make me do violence to my nature, in boxing your ears, and teach you to keep within the bounds of respect."

Fear of drawing some disgrace upon herself made her absolutely silent, but she was not without discovering some sort of emotion, which was an uneasiness to her spirits, so that I thought convenient to leave her to herself for that time.

But, my lord, it is now time I should acquaint you with the adventure which made me first truly sensible of the greatness of my misfortunes. Some days after the

above discourse, a faithful domestic of mine happened to find at the door of my wife's closet, a letter written in French, directed to the young lord. He brought it immediately to me. But, O my God! what became of me, when I found it was a billet-doux, written by madam your daughter, to the aforesaid person of quality, who expressed herself in the following words :—

To the most accomplished and noble lord, the Lord —.

My Lord,

It seems difficult for me to resist you any longer. Your love triumphs over mine, I am vanquished, and cannot longer be otherwise than yours. I have exposed myself to a thousand dangers, in receiving your letters; and I am undone, unless you prove prudent and faithful. Take care of preserving what you have written to me, and be grateful for the victory you have obtained. Should you henceforward be capable of forsaking me, you were not only the most cruel, but likewise the basest of mankind. It is easy to deceive our sex. But the easier it is, the more shame there is in doing it. Hitherto nothing has past between us, that we have cause to repent; tell me, then, sincerely, (ah! irresistible fate, if ever there should,) whether you will abandon me to the just resentments of those who have a right to reproach me for my indiscretion; and tell it me, before the fire that consumes me be grown more violent, and before we proceed further in an affair that would prove fatal to us. We must propose an end in all things, which we ought never to swerve from; and whereas those of my sex have but little foresight, I abandon myself to yours,

and believe you will have enough for us both. Be careful of yourself and me. I am afraid I shall give myself up to you for ever; and I declare to you, that if you accept me on the conditions I propose, I never shall be capable of conceiving the design of retracting. Farewell.

As there was no name at the bottom of this letter, the light I had formed of this amour did not appear conspicuous enough to make me as yet fix it upon my wife. But, however, I remained speechless for some time, and was as much struck by it as if thunder had fallen at my feet. How unfortunate am I, (said I to myself, being somewhat recovered from my surprise,) to have confided in a faithless creature that betrays me so basely! Having composed myself a little, and being resolved to know the utmost extent of my misfortune, I privately searched her cabinet, wherein I found three other letters addressed to the said young lord, and which I beseech you, sir, to read, the first of which letters being as followeth.

To the Noble Lord the Lord ——.

My Lord,

I should write oftener to you, my lord, if the opportunities of doing it were more frequent. I can no longer live contented, but with you; all my happiness centres in you, and I love you more than myself. You can no longer be ignorant of my tenderness towards you; you have often beheld my sufferings, of which my sighs have been undeniable proofs. Be not surprised at my discovering my sentiments to you. You have charmed me more than all mankind besides, so that I am the most passionate of all women. Hitherto I looked upon love as

a chimera, and 'tis you that have submitted me to his empire. Do not wonder at my having lived so long in this ignorance; but your eyes, whose darts are so piercing, have penetrated into my very soul. I am henceforward only yours, and am no longer my own. I call you day and night,—I expect you,—I long for you,—I only think on you; and your idea is sole possessor of my mind. I have promised you all, for you only have gained an absolute power over me. Consider, then, what you intend to do, and whether it be not better to save one who adores you, than to kill her who only lives for you. I expect by your answer the entire decision of my fate. Let the strokes of your writing be as piercing as those of your eyes. If they are, I shall live the happiest and most contented of womankind; otherwise your denial will kill with grief,

Yours,

The second runs thus,—

My Lord,

I wish you all the happiness and prosperity imaginable for the kindness you have done me. Your letter has been well and faithfully delivered,—the seal unaltered; and you may rest contented as to that. I can assure you that I have often interrupted the reading of it to kiss it; not that it is too favourable for me, but because that whatever comes from you is extremely dear to me. You ironically desire that we should cease loving one another; and to justify your desire of extinguishing the fire which has kindled itself in your heart, you allege the example of several who have been deceived. But you do it with

so much eloquence, that I am at a loss to know which of the two were easier,—to forget, or to cease admiring your wit. Teach me, if you can, the secret of driving you out of my heart, at the same moment that I discover so many new charms;—had you been so resolved to lessen my passion, you should not have written with so much wit as you have done. This is called kindling the fire that one would extinguish. I have already often told you that I am so entirely yours, that it is impossible for me ever to be otherwise. Pity me, then, instead of disputing it, and let your sentiments be conformable to mine. If you punish her that loves you, how would you use those that injure you? Proceed without despair, and do me the favour to let me know that I am dear to you, and that you will no longer be cruel.

Yours, &c.

This letter, which I found to be of the same kind as the preceding, convinced me that the intrigue was fixed. I found that the intelligence was reciprocal, and that madam, my spouse, and her gallant, were in a fair way; but, to be better satisfied, I opened the third letter, which was in the following terms.

To the Accomplished Lord ——.

My Lord,

The joy I have received by your letter is too great to be expressed. It is true, that the only thing that could any way diminish it, should be the doubt you express of my not loving you. You owe me a reparation for that injury; since I can protest to you, that though there are several persons who cherish you, their flame is not com-

parable to mine. Alter your opinion, then, I beseech you, and tell me no more that I take a great deal of pains in vain. If you continue in this strain, I can assure you that you will kill at once the most faithful of lovers, and the most sincere of all your friends. Your rigors will be much more capable of giving me death than the swords of my greatest enemies. I desire but one thing more of you, which is, to have some sensibility and acknowledgement for the tenderness I have for you. Tell me only, I love you, and by that declaration, which will only cost you three words, you will make me the happiest woman living. I always wear your ring, and kiss it incessantly.—Farewell.

The reading of these three letters was to me like so many darts, which pierced my heart. They informed me —or at least I so persuaded myself—that my lady grew weary of me, that I was become indifferent to her, and that somebody had stolen her affections from me. As I loved my spouse infinitely, I could not reflect on this loss without mortal grief; and in the design I formed of regaining her, I resolved to let her know cunningly that I was not ignorant of her intrigues.

In order to which, I expected some opportunity should offer itself; but it happened otherwise. She had been so vigilant as to know my measures, and was resolved to complain first, and that in the most provoking manner, by endeavouring to turn the tables upon a husband who had too great a regard for her charms than to let another take her place, and now a favourable juncture occurred, though it cost her dear. And thus it happened,—which, that I may not vary from matters of fact, I take in her own

words, as she related to a faithful niece of mine, who told it me verbatim afterwards.

" 'And now, my dear niece,' said she, 'to satisfy you further of the distance between me and my husband, you must know that my brother-in-law, and some other relations, came to visit us about that time, whom we entertained very splendidly; but as I could not sit altogether easy under my husband's suspicions, he perceived that affliction had overwhelmed me; and one day, as we sat at table, said to me, 'Permit me, dear sister, to ask the reason of your appearing so sad? I believe, however, that you are very glad to see us; and I take too great an interest in what concerns you, not to desire to know what afflicts you.'

" 'I beg your pardon, dear brother,' answered I; 'if I am sad at a time when I ought to be so joyful, having so just a cause for it, as the honour of seeing you. But I must needs have a very great cause of grief, not to be able to overcome it in your presence.' My husband, who, I thought, feared the sequel of this discourse, would interrupt it, and thinking to do it effectually, told my brother, 'it is so usual a thing for my wife to afflict herself at the least trifle, that I am already altogether used to it; so that, without minding it, we will, if you believe me, continue our mirth, and so much the worse for her, if she will not make one.'

" And these words he spoke with a disdainful air, which touched me so sensibly, that, unfortunately for me, it obliged me to make him this answer,—'Your suspicions are the only cause of my affliction; it is your amours with a certain coquet that disgraces us both, and I can

no longer endure that such an inconsiderable creature should so rob me of the tenderness you owe me.'

"My husband answered me by a blow on the ear. 'This,' said he, 'is the coin in which I was resolved to pay the first liberty you should take in making me those kind of reproaches.' That cruel blow, which stunned me, and bruised all my nose, having drawn a great deal of blood, obliged me to rise from table. I had so much power over myself as not to answer, for fear of redoubling my disgrace. I ran to my closet, where the grief, spite, and shame, of being used thus before persons of my quality, opened so large a flood to my tears, that I was covered all over with them. All the company were disturbed by it, and my brother, who was the cause (though innocently) of that affront, was not to be comforted.

"He came to me, to tell me, that he thought himself very unhappy to have contributed to such an outrage. He protested to me that he was mortally grieved at it; and after having begged my pardon, he went back to my husband, whom he found not cool yet; and therefore, not to exasperate him the more, he only contented himself with saying these few words,—'Ah, my brother, this is too much.'—'Yes,' replied he, 'but the occasion required it.'

"Thus matters stood a little, till he judged my husband capable of advice, when he told him plainly, that he was to blame; that those violences were unbecoming his character; and that a young lady, like me, was not to be used so unworthily. He added, that having partly been the cause of that affront, he was not to be comforted for it; and that he had been able to foresee that accident.

In fine, he declared to him, that he was resolved to retire the next day; and even without taking leave of him, unless he made me reparation that very day for the affront he had done me.

" ' What you desire of me is so just,' answered my husband, ' that if you desire it, it shall be done instantly.'—' The sooner the better,' said my brother; ' but suffer me first to give your lady notice of it, and to dispose her to receive you.'

" My husband consented to all: and my brother being come to my closet, found me in an inconceivable sadness, and said to me, in order to diminish it, ' Dear sister, you will make yourself ill, if you abandon yourself thus to your grief; and you might soon offend God, in suffering it to continue so long. Your husband is coming to see you: he is very sorry for the injury his passion has made him inflict, and will excuse himself to you for it. Receive him favourably, and be careful not to hinder your reconciliation by vexing him any farther.

" My brother had hardly spoken thus, when my husband came into my closet, and accosted me with a pleasing countenance, telling me, with that agreeableness which is usual to him, and which he can assume whenever he pleases; ' Well, madam, do you still preserve any indignation against a passionate husband, who does but too well deserve it? And will you not promise me to forget what is passed, in favour of the acknowledgments I have already made?'

" I do no longer remember anything," said I; " and the grief you express for that which I have received, is too obliging not to make me lose the remembrance of it. If I am not yet altogether satisfied with both, it is

only because my dear brother and sister have been witnesses of our difference. They have cause to complain of the manner of their reception, and must needs depart from home dissatisfied with having seen us in such a disposition.

" ' Fear nothing on that point,' said my sister, ' we are so well pleased with what we see at present, that we congratulate you upon it with all our hearts.'—' That is very kind,' said I ; ' and since you are no longer concerned, I am willing to forget all.'—' And for my part,' said my husband, embracing me, ' I in my turn will forget all, except the remembering that you are the best and most generous woman in the world ; and I wish that my cheek may blot out the brutal blow of my hand.'

" And here, after some other discourse of tenderness and reconciliation, seemingly to the satisfaction of all the company, he took leave of me and left me to myself.

" Night being come, and supper served, I was sent for to come to table : but being engaged in writing some letters to be sent by an extraordinary post that night, I ordered one of my gentlewomen to tell them that I begged them to excuse me for not eating with them that night; that I was obliged, in haste, to send several letters, which I could not defer till another time; they supped thus without me, and I caused something to be brought to me which I did eat in haste in my closet.

" My husband, perhaps, fearing I intended to write something about our differences, being desirous to find it out, or soon to hinder it, if it were possible, came to me that very night. I was surprised to see him. My letters were already dispatched—I was just going into bed, when he came in ; and one of my women having

opened the door to him—'I come,' said he, 'with a gallant air, to look for a refuge in this closet, knowing no place where I could be with more safety or pleasure.'—'Sir,' said I, 'you have no cause to fear, you are master everywhere. But if you will give me leave to dispose of my own apartment, you must suffer me to enjoy that repose which I stand in need of, and which these hours allow to all the world.'

"'Will you turn away,' said he, 'your husband, who is alone, and who expected to pass with you the most agreeable night he ever had?'—'You have of late made me sensible,' said I, 'that both my bed and person are things very indifferent to you; and I would not have you constrain yourself so far as to persuade me that your mind is altered.'—'However,' said he, 'it is not very generous to be cruel in your own apartment, and to repulse a man who cherishes and honours you.'—'You flatter me, sir,' said I, 'and I have such convincing proofs of it, that if you press me never so little, I will speak more plainly to you.'—'You will oblige me,' answered he, 'and I shall be glad to know the reasons which hinder you from allowing me the rights I ought to possess.'—'It is your indifference towards me, and the passion you have for another,' replied I, 'which persuades me that I owe this visit to policy, and which obliges me humbly to entreat you to leave me; for you can no longer give me a heart, in which I placed all the happiness of my life.'—'And who has taken it from you?' said my husband, with some transport.—'You know it better than I,' said I; 'and, after what is passed. I dare no more name the person I complain of.'

"'For heaven's sake, madam,' said he, 'do no longer

oppose the curiosity I have of knowing the person who has robbed you of a thing, which you look upon as being of some value.'—'You are not ignorant of it,' answered I; 'but instead of obliging me to pronounce an odious name, rather deliver up to me the person that owns it. I ought to punish her according to her deserts; and if you refuse that sacrifice to me, I shall believe that when you tell me that you love me, you add derision to treachery.'—'Now I understand you, madam,' replied he. 'I know who you mean; but I protest to you that you wrong that innocent maid, and that she is not so guilty as you imagine.'

"'What means this letter then?' said I, which, being in French, I read in the following words:—

"*To Mademoiselle ————, the Beautiful Charmer of my Soul.*

"My Life and Soul,—

"Is it possible for me to live, and not be always contemplating the many charms I found in you the other night? And can you forget all my assiduities, and the vehement passion I have for you? Oh, no, lovely fair one, I am inspired to believe you will complete the felicity of a wretch who has hitherto had nothing but visionary pleasures. I conjure you, therefore, to let me see you this night, when one who loves you as his soul, will think himself the happiest man living to expire in your arms."

"And does not this letter, my lord, equally prove my misfortune, your infidelity, and the crime of that coquet?'

—'These are great words, madam,' replied he; 'but there is a mistake, and you frighten yourself upon appearances.'—'Upon appearances,' said I, with some heat: 'know, sir, that no greater injury can be done to me; and that nothing but the blood of her I complain of can be capable of giving me satisfaction.'

"I then pulled out of my pocket another letter which troubled me, and having read it aloud,—'Well, sir,' said I, 'will you accuse me of wanting just reasons to punish this false one? And will you not own, at least, that I am better informed of your concerns than you desired?'

"My husband smiled at this reproach, and answered me with an air, which appeared pretty sincere to me, 'Is this all then, madam? Certainly you wrong yourself, in mistaking a trifle for a thing of moment. This letter, which alarms you, is only a piece of wit; and you might certainly be persuaded, that I should have been more careful of it, had I looked upon it as a thing whereof the expression had been dictated by the heart, or one in which I had taken a solid pleasure. But this is the real nature of the business. You know that Mademoiselle speaks and writes very good French. I was willing to exercise myself, and her also, to have some kind of converse with her in that language; and whereas, nothing is so proper to write to young persons of her sex, as gallantry, I acquainted her that Monsieur, our nephew, loved her, and desired her to answer him, as if she approved his passion, and had been proud of it; the poor lady has had that complaisance, and has written to me partly as you translate it; having made me her confidant.'

"'However,' said I, 'this communication is very sus-

picious; I have seen several letters that alarmed me: and cannot understand the jest of a young maid writing in such terms to her master and my husband. So, sir, plead her cause no longer, I beseech you, but deliver her up to me for my revenge.'

"'I should offend justice,' said he, 'should I not protect innocence. This poor lady has only failed in appearance, in obeying me effectively. Therefore, madam, calm yourself; for since those sort of things are displeasing to you, I will renounce them absolutely.'—'You will oblige me,' said I; and seeing that I could obtain no more from him, I told him that it was very late, and that the number of my dispatches had wearied me, and therefore conjured him, by his absence, to allow me some rest.

"'When I had the felicity of being united to your lordship,' said I, 'by the sacred knot of marriage, I acknowledged you as my master, and engaged myself to obey you. But sir,' continued I, weeping, 'would you always give me a divided heart? And can you without regret prefer a rival, who does not love you so much as I do, and who may, without wronging herself, yield to me in everything else?'

"'I tell you, madam,' added he, 'that your suspicions magnify objects; and that the phantasm that troubles you, is the effect of a deceived imagination. But let us make peace.' We were entirely reconciled. He protested to me a thousand times, that this commerce of letters was innocent; that Mademoiselle was virtuous; and that he would rather die, than violate the fidelity he had sworn to me.

"I answered, as I thought, to those kind and satisfying expressions. I told him that I was very well satisfied;

and we rose the next morning, at least on my part, with a firm resolution of living for the future in a perfect intelligence.

"I relished, for some days, the pleasure of being reconciled to what one loves; but that pleasure was not lasting. The demon who delights in ruining the best union, came to trouble ours; and did it in a manner that has been too public I am afraid."

Thus, sir, you may perceive that I deal fairly with your lordship; but you will more especially see that these are all forgeries of your daughter, proceeding from her own guilt, and caused by her having repeated so many falsities, for it is plain that the young lady she there pretends to say was my mistress, had not been in the family for six months before the time of her forging the letter your unhappy daughter insinuates I wrote to her, nay, Madame the B———s of —— can witness for her, who is her aunt, that she was all the time this plan was forming, at one of your country seats, fifteen leagues from the capital of these territories, and where I never was but once, and that some years since.

But there will need no further apology for my own conduct in this affair, for after having had children by madam your daughter, who I loved entirely, your lordship will embrace my cause when I tell you what my own eyes were witness to, which, if well weighed, will strike with amazement the inquisitive world. And thus it was.

There was an appointment made in my family to go and spend the summer at the pleasant town of H——n, to which I agreed, and went thither with my spouse and a splendid retinue, where I met with a great concourse

of persons of distinction, the most eminent of whom I invited one day to a costly entertainment; but I had very great reason to repent of this treat, not so much for the profuseness of it, but the affront my spouse put upon me in the presence of them all. As she was very richly dressed, (perhaps with more gaiety than usually becomes a mother of children,) I chanced to lay my hand on her bosom, for which she gave such a disdainful look, accompanied with such haughty expressions, that the company could not but observe, by my looks, my resentment was in proportion to the affront.

But this is a trivial matter; I shall not conceal the most important from you;—I had not shared above half the summer diversion at this place, when business called me home. It was my desire the whole family should also depart; but, madam your daughter was pleased to take the freedom to stay there some time after me. She knew that it would displease me. And, indeed, she behaved herself in so high a manner, that I was pitied by all those who know the sequel of our differences.

However, the summer having almost expired, after several orders for her to return home, she sent me answers in such a strain, that they were the most provoking that could come from a wife. One was, that she was not so indiscreet, but she could tell when her affairs required her from her country seat. A second, that she knew time was flitting, and that she was not so bad a register, but that she could tell how long the season would permit her to stay; with other like undutiful expressions not fitting for a husband to bear.

Upon this, I sent my positive commands for her to

return in a fixed time, and that I might not slight some private intelligence from one who was always near her, I went incognito to observe her behaviour; and here with grief, horror, and shame, my lord, I come to draw the fatal scene! Be it known to you, therefore, that having intelligence that she had admitted into her chamber a stranger, I had no longer patience, but, fired with resentment, I took two of my domestics, and bursting open the door, rushed in upon her, when I found them sitting together, with a familiarity no way allowable to any but husband and wife.

Patience immediately took flight and abandoned me to the most aggravated passion a man could bear, to act as rage and fury prompted me; so that, having a pistol in my hand, I fired it at the author of my misfortunes, just as he was leaping into a moat which surrounded the house.

Whether or not the pistol did any execution I cannot as yet tell; but true it is, the ravisher has never been heard of since.

And now, my lord, does not this fatal intrigue merit the highest resentment? Certainly you will not blame me, that, after this action, I should have given orders that your daughter should be confined to her chamber, with a maid or two, and that all my servants should strictly watch her apartments till I knew your lordship's pleasure.

But, my lord, my spouse having now time to recriminate her false conduct, and finding herself so narrowly observed, that her spies were uneasy about her, wrote to me the following letter.

"Sir.

"I am so much troubled by the many observers about my chamber door day and night, that I cannot sufficiently express to you the anguish it puts me in: the noise they make frightens me, and my captivity becomes every moment more insupportable. Permit me, sir, to entreat you to behave yourself towards me in a manner that may be approved of as a tenderness to my sex; and give me leave to tell you, that there is no need of placing so many spies about a woman who has nothing but her tears and innocence to oppose to them,—I say particularly my innocence, because that, after having examined myself well, and called to mind my conduct, and my whole life, I can find nothing in either wherein I could have intended to offend my husband, therefore I conjure you by all that is good, and by that tenderness you formerly had for me, to restore me to my liberty. If I am guilty, it is fit I should be punished; but if I am innocent, let me enjoy the privileges due to a wife. I desire a fair hearing, and that I may be allowed to use those means that may tend to my justification. I am so strangely disturbed by the noise of those you have set over me, that ever since they have changed my closet into a prison, I have not been able to take any rest. Be pleased to order them to retire; for if you will needs have me observed, three or four will be as effectual as so many. I am in a place where you are absolute master, and you have no cause to fear an escape, where you command so strictly.

"I am

Your disconsolate Wife,

And your most humble and obedient Servant."

This letter was delivered to me as I was at table. When I opened it at first sight, and having read it, ordered all should be dismissed but three or four, and those to make as little disturbance as possible. The order was immediately put in execution, and as she was rejoicing at the good effect her letter had produced, she received the following answer I writ to her.

" Madam,

" I am much surprised at your seeming to be ignorant of the cause of your confinement; therefore you accuse me of injustice, and insinuate that I persecute innocence in your person. However, it is not possible for you to have so soon forgotten the affront at H——n, when I ordered you to follow me, and ordered it in such a manner as showed I would be obeyed. Notwithstanding which, you not only disobeyed me, but remained there several weeks, where you spent an excessive deal of money, without considering that our estate and effects being already but too much drained, there was nothing to justify such profusion. I have besides another subject of complaint, to which you cannot plead ignorance. Remember, then, the affront which you put upon me before all my friends the day of the last feast. You appeared there in an extraordinary pomp and magnificence, and were most gloriously attired, but showed your neck with as much affectation as the most public coquet could do. But I was extremely surprised at your haughty rebuke. You behaved yourself towards me as if I had been a stranger to you; and you declared before all these gentlemen that in a little time you would not allow me any of those favours which marriage authorises, and

which you had no right to refuse me. Reflect, more upon your adventures since your return, and you wi obliged to acknowledge that my behaviour towards y very just, particularly since my discovery of that abominable amour which must for ever stop your m and make you think it no hardship if I should fi an excuse for a divorce. This is the reason that ind me to confine your person, as well to hinder your an as to satisfy my just revenge. Therefore if you follow my advice, resolve to be calm, and to con yourself to the circumstances you are in, which if do, perhaps an expedient may be found out, (after ha first writ to your father,) whereby you shall not onl set at liberty, but besides, possess a pension, fit to n tain one of your rank. I expect your last resolution, am your abused husband, &c."

After the reading of this surprising letter, I was that she flung herself on the bed and remained for s time more dead than alive, not knowing what to res upon. She saw herself in the hands of an angry husb who had an absolute power over her, and had nobod advise or comfort her. Nevertheless something was be resolved upon, and a positive answer to be given; believing I expected it with impatience, she sent on her maids to me to tell me that she neither was in a c dition nor had the will to resist me; that she submit to all, excepting the consenting to a divorce; that it a case of conscience which ought not to be decided lightly. That if, however, I was so much bent upon that nothing could prevail to the contrary, I might s

in that case receive satisfaction, since she found herself very much inclined to refuse me nothing.

This maid, who loved her, performed her errand faithfully; and I was so extremely pleased with her message, that I bid her hasten to tell her, that she could not pitch upon anything more useful to her than complaisance. And that in order to begin my acknowledgment of it, I was going to put her more at liberty. "She may walk in the gardens," I added, "and as to the scruple she expresses about a divorce, tell her she need not have any, and that I take all the ill she might fear upon myself. Above all, advise her not to write anything to her relations about it, till I have received an answer from the most indulgent lord her father, but tell her to behave herself so as not to give me cause to repent the indulgence I design her."

She had not my promise long to wait for; that very evening she went out, and took the benefit of the air; and since that time has had more liberty than any one (sorry for the crimes she stands charged with) could desire.

And in this statement, my dear lord and father, you have read the injuries I have received from one whom my bosom has nursed with the most cherishing fidelity and tenderness. . . . Would to heaven I could for ever obliterate the remembrance of those unhappy transgressions out of my mind, provided a sincere contrition and repentance might accompany her serious consideration of the heinousness of them.

Sure I am, that for the sake of my dear children, I should have some regard for the womb that bare them. And with the like confidence do I believe your paternal

care for her spiritual welfare, will recommend to her with all the force and energy of words, the authority of a parent has a right to inculcate, with such wholesome admonitions as may put her upon a speedy and strict examination of her misconduct, as may find a way for some seeming compensation.

And now, my lord, having tired your lordship with what can in no way be grateful to a virtuous mind, it is high time I put a period to so melancholy a subject; and which shall be concluded with my submissive expectations of those seasonable commands you will be pleased to lay me under, as to my future conduct in so nice an affair. I am, my lord, with infinite submission, your afflicted son, and most humble servant.

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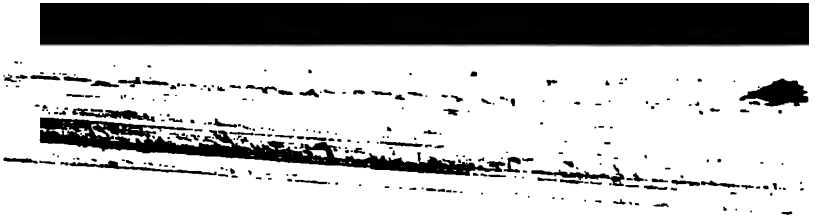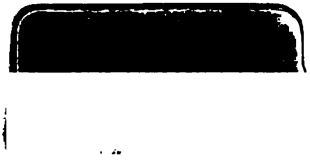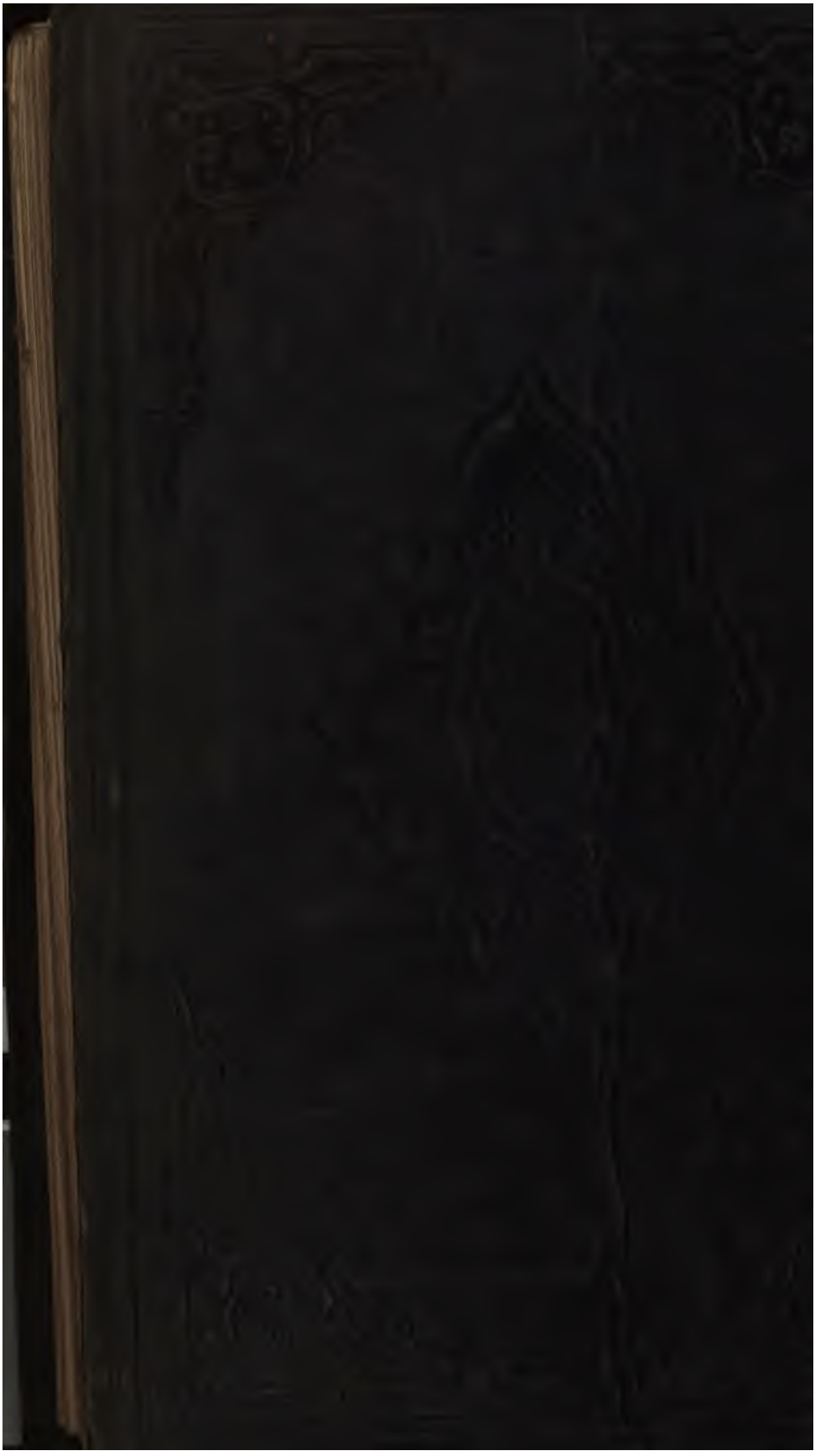
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